TERROR

EC
NO. 41
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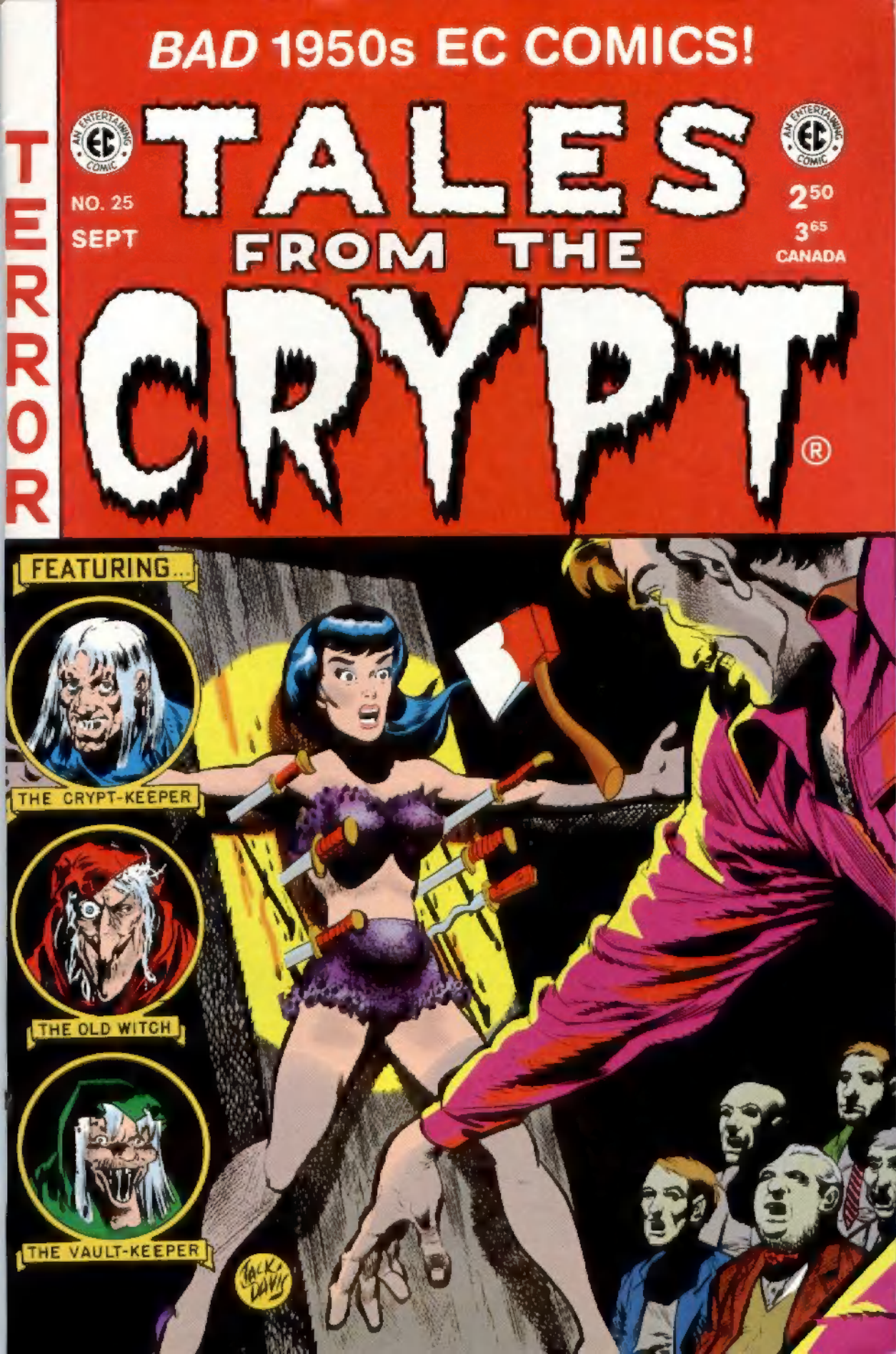
TALES
FROM THE
CRYPT
FEATURING
THE CRYPT-KEEPER
THE OLD WITCH
THE VAULT-KEEPER

BAD 1950s EC COMICS!

TERROR



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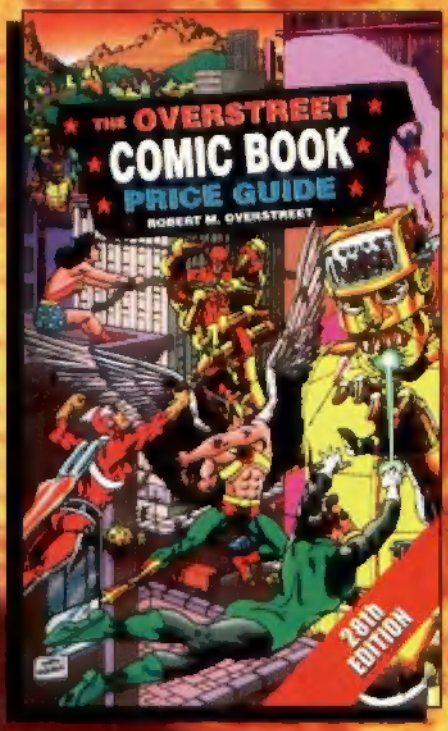

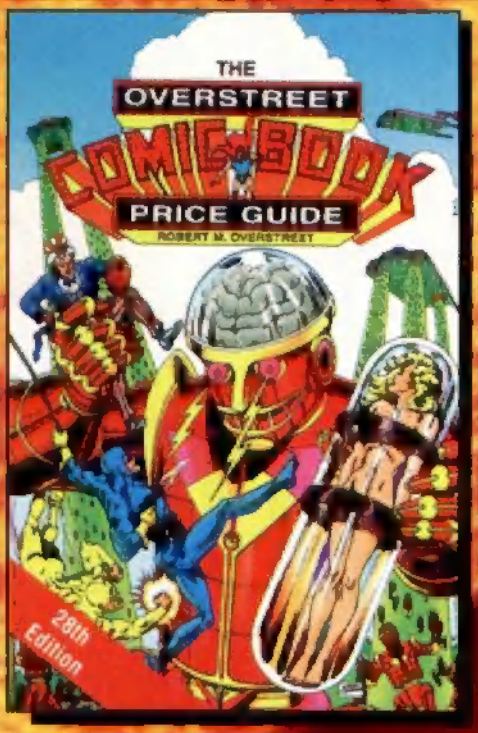

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH... AND HEH! (JUST TO BE DIFFERENT.) CRAWL INTO THE *CREEPY* OLD *CRUDDY CRYPT OF TERROR*, FIENDS. THIS IS YOUR *GHOSTLY HOST, LE CRYPT-KEEPER*... YOUR *MASTER OF CEMETERIES*... READY TO *THRILL* YOU, *CHILL* YOU, AND *KILL* YOU WITH A *SLIMY SELECTION* FROM MY *FIENDISH FILE* OF *FOUL FANCIES*. *READY?* WELL, HERE GOES WITH THE *YOWL YARN* I CALL...

OPERATION FRIENDSHIP

Tales from the Crypt (USPS 008606) Vol. 1, No. 25, September 1998, published quarterly in September, December, March and June by Gemstone Publishing, #4 Court Square, West Plains, MO 65775-3532. **Periodicals postage paid at West Plains, MO.** Entire contents © 1998 by William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc. Tales From The Crypt #41 © 1954 by I.C. Publishing Co., Inc., re © 1979 by William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing herein contained may be reproduced without the written permission of William M. Gaines, New York, New York. Annual subscription rate $10 ($16 outside US payable in US funds). Printed in Canada. **Postmaster: send address changes to Tales from the Crypt, Gemstone, PO Box 469, West Plains, MO 65775-0469.**

DOCTOR HOBART PLACED THE CHESSBOARD ON THE LOW TABLE BEFORE HIM...

OTHERS MIGHT *SCOFF*, PHILIP, BUT *I* SAY OURS IS ONE OF LIFE'S *RARITIES*...A *PERFECT FRIENDSHIP*...A MEETING OF THE *MINDS*... A *MENTAL MATING* FAR MORE *LASTING* AND *REWARDING* THAN THAT OF *MAN* AND *WIFE*.

THE OLD DOCTOR WENT ON GARRULOUSLY, ALWAYS THE MORE TALKATIVE OF THE TWO, HARDLY GIVING THE OTHER A CHANCE TO SPEAK. HIS VOICE DRIPPED ON... RICH WITH MELLOW MEMORIES... NOSTALGIC REMINISCENCE...

YES, PHILIP! *TWENTY YEARS* OF THIS. REMEMBER HOW IT ALL BEGAN, PHILIP? HOW, AS KIDS, OUR FAMILIES MOVED NEXT DOOR TO EACH OTHER! REMEMBER?

'REMEMBER HOW, LIKE ALL KIDS, WE WERE SHY AT FIRST, BUT QUICKLY WARMED UP... FOUND THAT WE LIKED THE SAME THINGS...'

GOSH, ANDY! I LIKE YOU.

I LIKE YOU TOO, PHIL. LET'S BE *PALS FOR LIFE*... AND *SEAL IT IN BLOOD*...

'A KID'S PRANK? NO. IT WAS MORE THAN THAT, PHIL! IT WAS A PACT OF DEVOTION THAT NOTHING HAS BEEN ABLE TO TEAR APART IN ALL THESE YEARS! NOTHING!'

SIGN YOUR NAME, PHIL. WE'LL BE *BUDDIES FOREVER*...

TILL WE'RE *OLD MEN* AND READY TO *DIE*, ANDY...

'REMEMBER, PHIL? REMEMBER HOW INSEPARABLE WE WERE... PLAYING TOGETHER... GOING PLACES TOGETHER... FIGHTING TOGETHER... TWO OF US AGAINST THE WORLD?...'

YOU *BIG BULLY!* DON'T *EVER* PICK ON MY PAL PHIL *AGAIN*, D'Y'HEAR?

OKAY! OKAY! I GIVE UP! I PROMISE! OWWWW...

SOB... SOB...

'REMEMBER, PHILIP? WE WERE A MODERN *DAMON* AND *PYTHIAS*. AND AS WE GREW OUT OF BOYHOOD, WE BECAME EVEN CLOSER, IF ANYTHING. REMEMBER, IN HIGH SCHOOL, HOW EVEN THE *PRETTIEST* GIRLS FAILED TO PULL US APART?...'

SORRY, JOAN! *PHIL* AND *I* ARE GOING TO THE MOVIES *OURSELVES* TONIGHT... *TOGETHER!*

I WON'T *ASK* YOU *AGAIN*, ANDREW HOBART! YOU'RE... YOU'RE NOT *HUMAN!*

'NONE OF THE GIRLS *UNDERSTOOD*, PHIL. THEY *COULDN'T*. *THEIR* CHEAP THRILLS OF DATING AND PETTING WERE AS *SAWDUST* TO THE *PLATONIC ECSTASY* OF *OUR* EMBRACING MINDS...'

I'VE DECIDED ON *MEDICINE*, PHIL! WHY DON'T *YOU* STUDY IT *WITH* ME?

SORRY, ANDY! *ELECTRONICS* IS *MY* MEAT!

'COLLEGE! THE *SAME* COLLEGE, OF COURSE. NATURALLY, WE COULD NOT BE EXACTLY ALIKE IN ALL THINGS. *I* PROBED *LIVING* MECHANISMS AND *YOU* PROBED *COLD LIFELESS* ONES. BUT EVEN HERE, WE FOUND COMMON GROUND...'

IT'S A *WELL KNOWN FACT* THAT THE BRAIN EMITS *ELECTRONIC IMPULSES*, PHIL. *WHY DO YOU ASK?*

I WAS JUST *WONDERING*, ANDY. SUPPOSE WE COULD *CAPTURE* THOSE IMPULSES AND *REPRODUCE* THEM INTO *AUDIBLE SOUNDS...ELECTRONICALLY.*

'REMEMBER HOW WE WORKED TOGETHER ON YOUR THEORY, PHIL? THE CRAZY MACHINE WE BUILT. REMEMBER THAT SQUID...HOW WE KEPT IT ALIVE IN THE BRINE WATER... ATTACHING THE ELECTRODES TO ITS HEAD?...

LISTEN, ANDY! *LISTEN!*

EAWWKKKKK! WWEEEEEKKK!

IT *WORKS*, PHIL! *IT WORKS!*

'WE USED THAT CLEVER GADGET FOR OUR COMBINED DOCTORATE THESES. WE KNOCKED 'EM DEAD, DIDN'T WE PHIL... GRADUATED WITH TOP HONORS.'

CONGRATULATIONS, ANDY!

SAME TO *YOU*... PHIL!

'AND WENT OUT INTO THE WORLD TOGETHER. REMEMBER HOW WE FOUND THOSE TWO OFFICES SIDE BY SIDE? I HUNG OUT MY *M.D.* SHINGLE AND YOU HUNG OUT YOUR *ELECTRONIC ENGINEER'S* SIGN...'

READY FOR *LUNCH*, PHIL?

LET'S GO...

ANDREW HOBART M.D.

DOCTOR ANDREW HOBART STUDIED THE CHESSBOARD BEFORE HIM AS IF HE WERE CONTEMPLATING THE MOVE HE'D HAD IN MIND WHEN THEY'D LEFT OFF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT...

WE *BOTH* MADE OUR *MARKS*, PHIL! *YOU* IN *ELECTRONIC PATENTS*...*I* IN *SURGERY*, AND *ALWAYS*, FROM THOSE *FIRST YEARS*, LIKE *NOW*, WE SPENT *EVERY EVENING TOGETHER*, OUR FRIENDSHIP *CEMENTING* ITSELF *FIRMER EACH YEAR*. REMEMBER?

'AND THEN CAME THOSE AWFUL WEEKS. I STILL SHUDDER AT THE MEMORY, PHILIP. I KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG. I FELT IT. EVERY EVENING YOU GREW MORE AND MORE MOODY...'

I CAN'T MAKE IT TOMORROW NIGHT, ANDY! SOMETHING CAME UP!

SURE, PHIL! I *UNDERSTAND*.

'YOU STOPPED COMING. FIRST YOU SKIPPED ONE DAY A WEEK. THEN TWO. THEN YOU HARDLY CAME AT ALL. I HAD TO KNOW WHY...'

WHAT'S *WRONG*, PHIL? I CAN *FEEL SOMETHING STANDING BETWEEN US!* WHAT *IS* IT? *TELL ME!* I *MUST KNOW!*

HOW CAN I *TELL* YOU, ANDY? I...I...IT ISN'T *EASY!*

'YOUR HESITATION...YOUR AVERTED EYES. A COLD CHILL GRIPPED ME AND I STEELED MYSELF FOR THE SHOCK OF WHAT I COULD ALMOST GUESS...'

I'M...I'M IN *LOVE*, ANDY!

NO, PHIL...

'YOU WENT ON, NOT KNOWING HOW EACH WORD WHIPLASHED MY FLINCHING SOUL...'

HER NAME IS JONDRA! HERE...HERE'S HER PICTURE! ISN'T SHE PRETTY?

VERY... LOVELY... PHIL!

I'M GOING TO *MARRY* HER, ANDY!

MARRY?! BUT PHIL! OUR... OUR *FRIEND-SHIP*...AFTER ALL, THESE YEARS... YOU'LL BE BREAKING IT UP...

PLEASE, ANDY. DON'T MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A DOG! AFTER ALL, I AM GETTING ALONG IN YEARS! I'M ALMOST THIRTY! IT'S *NORMAL* FOR A MAN MY AGE TO WANT A *WIFE*...A *HOME*...*KIDS!* AND OUR FRIENDSHIP ISN'T BREAKING UP. YOU'LL *LIKE* JONDRA. AND...

NO, PHIL! IT WON'T BE THE *SAME* WITH YOU *MARRIED!* YOU CAN'T *DO* IT! *LISTEN* TO ME...

'REMEMBER HOW I PLEADED WITH YOU, PHILIP... ARGUED...RAVED...STORMED...GROVELED ON BENDED KNEES?...'

PHIL, YOU *CAN'T* CAST ASIDE OUR *FRIEND-SHIP* LIKE AN *OLD SHOE*. IT'S *TOO SACRED!* MARRIAGE IS FOR *OTHERS*, NOT FOR *US*, WITH *OUR* WEDDED *MINDS!* PHIL, I BEG OF YOU. *GIVE THIS CREATURE UP!*

I'M... SORRY, ANDY...

YOU TURNED A STONEY HEART TO YOUR OLD FRIEND, PHILIP, AND THEN, ONE DAY, YOU BROUGHT JONDRA TO MEET ME. SHE WAS *LOVELY*, ALL RIGHT...ON THE *OUTSIDE!* BUT A *MENTAL VACUUM WITHIN*...

THIS IS *ANDREW HOBART*, JANDRA!

GEE, PHILLY'S TOL' ME ALL *ABOUT* YUH, DOC. HE SAYS YOU'RE *REAL SMART*.

YOUR FIANCEE *EXAGGERATES*, JONDRA! IT IS *PHILIP* WHO IS THE *SMARTER* OF THE TWO OF US!

PHILLY? SMART? AW, G'WON! HE'S *BIG* AN' *HANDSOME* AN'...AND HE CAN PLAY A *MEAN GAME OF TENNIS*, BUT *SMART? REALLY?* YER KIDDIN'! *PHILLY? YOU SMART?*

'AFTER YOU AND JONDRA LEFT, I *CRIED*, PHILIP. NO, NOT FOR *ME* AND MY *LONELINESS*...BUT FOR *YOU*.'

SOB...THAT *GIRL!* THAT...SOB... *FELINE!* ALL SHE WANTS OF HIM IS A *PLAYMATE* AND A *LOVER*... HIS *PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES*... WHILE HIS *FINE MIND* GOES TO *WASTE!*

'WEDDING BELLS TOLLED *HAPPINESS* FOR *YOU*, PHILIP...*MISERY* FOR *ME*. I WAS YOUR *BEST MAN*, OF COURSE, BUT NO LONGER YOUR *BEST FRIEND*...CLOSEST COMPANION...'

S'LONG, ANDY!

'BYE, DOC! SEE YUH...

GOOD-BYE, PHIL... CHOKE...

'AND THEN I SAT ALONE, PHILIP... EVENING AFTER EVENING... LISTENING TO THAT AWFUL SILENCE...STARING AT YOUR EMPTY CHAIR...'

PHIL! COME BACK TO ME...SOB...SOB...PHIL...

'THOSE BITTER LONELY HOURS, PHILIP...DRAGGING BY... EACH AN ETERNITY... UNTIL I COULD *STAND IT NO MORE*. I WAS *READY* TO *TAKE MY LIFE*, PHILIP...READY TO *SLIT MY THROAT* WITH ONE OF MY *OWN RAZOR-SHARP SCALPELS*, WHEN...'

THE...*ONLY*...*WAY*... *OUT*...CHOKE...

RRIINNGG

'THAT PHONE CALL SAVED ME, PHILIP. IT ALSO SAVED YOU. IT WAS THE HOSPITAL...AN EMERGENCY OPERATION...*MAJOR LOBOTOMY*. IT WAS WHILE I WAS REMOVING THAT DISEASED PORTION OF THE PATIENT'S BRAIN THAT IT CAME TO ME...'

OF COURSE! THE *REAL* WAY OUT! THE NOBLEST, MOST SENSIBLE WAY OUT...

'I FITTED UP MY BASEMENT WITH EQUIPMENT...MADE MYSELF AN EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY...STARTED MY RESEARCH...LOST MYSELF IN MY WORK...'

LOBOTOMIES HAVE *CUT AWAY WHOLE PORTIONS* OF THE BRAIN THAT WERE DISEASED...ROTTED... TUMORED. THE PART OF THE BRAIN THAT WAS *LEFT CONTINUED TO CARRY ON THE BODY PROCESSES*...

'...SPENT TWO YEARS TRACKING DOWN THE ANSWER... AND THEN I FOUND IT, AND MY CHANCE CAME WHEN YOU CALLED ONE DAY...'

WHAT? OH, I'M *SORRY* TO *HEAR* THAT, PHIL! YOU'RE *NOT* GOING *WITH HER?* THEN WHY NOT COME *HERE* AND SPEND THE TWO WEEKS WITH *ME?* *GOOD!* I'LL *EXPECT* YOU, THEN! GOOD-BYE...

'THAT WAS A BREAK, WASN'T IT, PHILIP? JONDRA HAVING TO GO HOME FOR TWO WEEKS DUE TO AN ILLNESS IN THE FAMILY! IT CAME AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME. I WAS READY...'
YOUR MOVE, ANDY! HEH, HEH. JUST LIKE OLD TIMES, EH?
I...I SEE THE SIGNS, PHIL! YOUR MARRIAGE IS PALLING ON YOU! JONDRA SICKENS YOU, DOESN'T SHE...?
'REMEMBER HOW YOU TURNED ON ME, ANGRILY?...'
ARE YOU MAD, ANDY? WHERE DID YOU GET SUCH A CRAZY IDEA? I LOVE HER...EVEN IF SHE ISN'T SO BRILLIANT! SHE'S FUN, ANDY! I'VE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY...
POOR LOYAL PHILIP! YOU DIDN'T WANT TO HURT HER, DID YOU? YOU DIDN'T WANT TO CAST HER ASIDE LIKE THE TRASH SHE WAS FOR WASTING YOUR LIFE...SUFFOCATING YOUR WONDERFUL MIND IN DREARY TRIVIALITIES. WELL, YOU DIDN'T FOOL ME, PHILIP. I PITIED YOU, FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART...
'AND I GAVE YOU WARNING, AS ONE FRIEND TO ANOTHER...'
IF YOU KEEP UP WITH THAT WOMAN... LET HER DRAG YOU DOWN TO HER MORONIC DEPTHS...YOU WILL BE DEGRADING YOURSELF!
STOP IT, ANDY! THAT'S ENOUGH! EITHER WE DROP THE SUBJECT OR...
'TOO BAD, PHILIP! TOO BAD YOU WERE SO STUBBORN! IF I'D ONLY CONVINCED YOU...'
ALL RIGHT, PHILIP! NO NEED TO GET ANGRY! THE SUBJECT IS CLOSED!
YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT SOME EXPERIMENTS YOU'VE BEEN DOING, ANDY!
OH, YES! COME ALONG! I'VE SET UP A LABORATORY IN THE CELLAR. THIS WAY...
WHY, YOU'VE GOT A GREAT DEAL OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT DOWN HERE, ANDY! DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE HORNING IN ON MY RACKET...
NO, PHILIP! I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THEORIES RELATING TO BRAIN SURGERY, RECENTLY. IN FACT... I'M ABOUT READY TO PERFORM MY FIRST SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT LOBOTOMY...
ALL YOU NEED IS THE PATIENT, EH, ANDY?

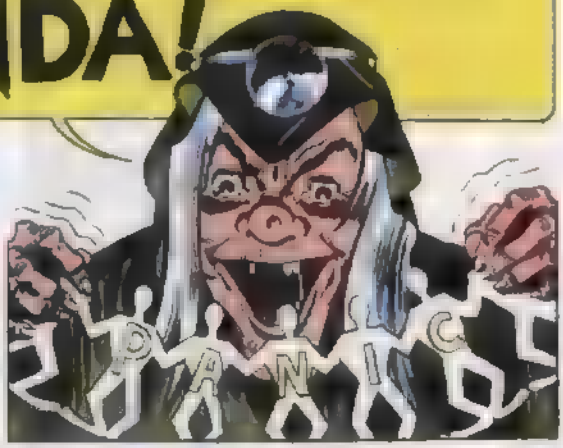
DOCTOR HOBART LOOKED UP, HIS DREAMY THOUGHTS RETURNED TO THE PRESENT BY THE SHARP HAMMERING ON THE DOOR...
OH, BLAST! I FORGOT! IT'S THURSDAY! THEY'RE HERE FOR THEIR WEEKLY VISIT!
KNOK KNOK
DOCTOR HOBART STEPPED OUT THROUGH THE SLIDING DOORS OF THE LIBRARY, TURNING TO CLOSE THEM...
I'LL BE BACK IN AS SOON AS THEY'VE GONE, PHILIP! THEN WE CAN CONTINUE OUR GAME!
THE LIBRARY DOORS LOCKED, ANDREW SWUNG OPEN THE FRONT DOOR...
AH... PHILIP! JONDRA! COME IN...COME IN...
WE CAN'T STAY LONG TONIGHT, CAN WE DEAR?
HUH? OH, YEAH... I MEAN... NO, ANDY! WE...CAN'T!
DOCTOR HOBART LED HIS GUESTS PAST THE LIBRARY INTO THE SITTING ROOM...
GOING DANCING AGAIN, PHILIP? AREN'T YOU GETTING A LITTLE OLD FOR THAT?
HUH? NAW... WE ENJOY DANCING... DON'T WE...JONDRA? LOTSA FUN, DANCING...
IT WAS A DULL, DESULTORY VISIT WITH JONDRA OBVIOUSLY IMPATIENT TO GO, AND PHIL DOING LITTLE TO CARRY ON ANY CONVERSATION. THIS IS THE WAY IT'D BEEN EVERY WEEK FOR TWENTY YEARS...
WELL, WE REALLY MUST BE GOING! COME ALONG, PHILIP!
HUH! OH, YEAH! BYE, ANDY! SEE YOU...
OF COURSE, PHILIP! NEXT WEEK! GOOD-BYE...
DOCTOR HOBART LED THEM TO THE FRONT DOOR, WATCHED THEM HURRY DOWN THE WALK TO THEIR WAITING CAR...
THEN HE UNLOCKED THE DOOR AND WENT INTO THE LIBRARY...
YOU KNOW, PHILIP, I DON'T THINK JONDRA NOTICED THE LEAST DIFFERENCE WHEN SHE CAME HOME FROM THAT VISIT TO HER FAMILY TWENTY YEARS AGO. SHE STILL HAS THE THINGS SHE WANTS OF HER HUSBAND. THE PHYSICAL THINGS. SHE'S PERFECTLY SATISFIED WITH YOUR BODY, AND...
7

...AND TWENTY-FIVE PER-CENT OF YOUR BRAIN, AND I'VE GOT THE REAL YOU, PHILIP...THE IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR BRAIN...YOUR CREATIVE ARTISTIC PART...
THE BRAIN FLOATED LAZILY IN THE JAR OF AMBER LIQUID...
AND SO THE YEARS STRETCH HAPPILY AHEAD OF US, PHILIP! YOU AND I...TOGETHER TILL DEATH...IN MENTAL COMPANION-SHIP.
DOCTOR HOBART FLIPPED ON THE VOICE AMPLIFIER SWITCH FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT EVENING... AND TUNED THE VOLUME...
ALL RIGHT, PHILIP! GO AHEAD! RANT AND RAVE!
OH, GOD! WHY DID YOU DO IT? WHY? I LOVED HER! I WAS HAPPY WITH HER! WHY DIDN'T YOU BELIEVE ME?
DOCTOR HOBART SHOOK HIS HEAD, SMILING WARMLY AT THE BRAIN SUSPENDED IN THE BUBBLING LIQUID...
OH, DON'T BE A FOOL, PHILIP! WHY MUST WE ALWAYS GO THROUGH THIS...EVERY NIGHT... BEFORE WE CAN SETTLE DOWN TO A NICE QUIET EVENING!? I DID THIS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD! I RESCUED YOU FROM THAT NITWIT FEMALE. WHY, IF YOU HAD GONE ON LIVING WITH HER FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS...
...YOU WOULD HAVE LOST YOUR MIND!
IT'S YOU WHO LOST YOUR MIND, ANDREW! YOU! YOU'RE MAD! MAD! AND, OH LORD, LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO ME!
DOCTOR HOBART REACHED FOR THE VOICE AMPLIFIER SWITCH, THE BRAIN SEEMED TO TWIST SLIGHTLY AS IT FLOATED BUOYANTLY IN THE JAR...
MUST I TURN YOU OFF, PHILIP, OR WILL YOU BE GOOD SO WE CAN GO ON WITH OUR GAME? ER... I BELIEVE IT'S MY MOVE!
NO! WE STOPPED LAST NIGHT AFTER YOUR MOVE! IT'S MY MOVE...
HEH, HEH! WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT A WEDDING OF MINDS? CERTAINLY SOUNDS LIKE THE MAD DOCTOR AND HIS BOTTLED BRAIN ARE MARRIED. LISTEN TO THEM ARGUE ABOUT WHO GOES FIRST AND YOU'LL ARGUE ABOUT WHO GOES FIRST...TO JOIN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICTS ... THAT IS... WHEN YOU SEE THE STUFF YOU CAN GET, LIKE BACK ISSUES WHEN YOU WRITE US FOR ORDERING INFO. NOW, THE VAULT-KEEPER AWAITS WITH A YARN TO DRIVE ALL YOU MANIACS SANE. I'LL SEE YOU LATER!

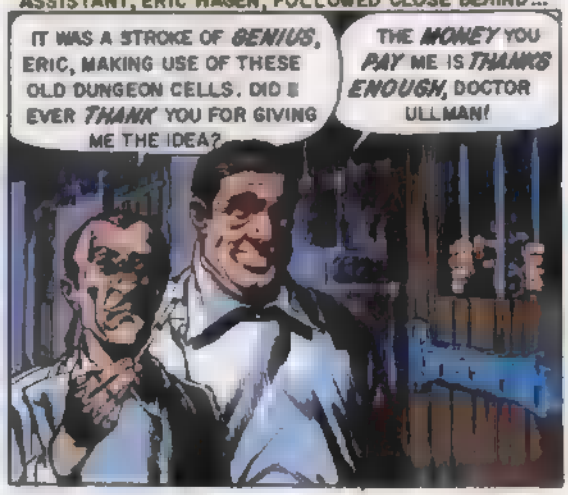
THE VAULT OF HORROR!®

HEH, HEH! AND NOW THAT C.K. HAS *CHILLED* YOUR BLOOD WITH HIS *CRYPT CAPER*, IT'S TIME FOR *ME* TO *FREEZE IT!* YEP, IT'S YOUR *HOST* IN *THE VAULT OF HORROR*, *THE VAULT-KEEPER*, READY TO *ENTERTAIN* YOU WITH A VISIT TO AN *INSANE ASYLUM*. I *CALL* THIS *MAD* (PLUG!) YARN... THIS TALE OF *PANIC* (DITTO!) IN THE *BOOBY-HATCH*...

COME BACK, LITTLE LINDA!



DOCTOR MORGAN ULLMAN, THE DIRECTOR OF THE COUNTY INSANE ASYLUM, MOVED SLOWLY THROUGH THE DARK DIM PASSAGEWAY LINED ON EITHER SIDE WITH ANCIENT OAKEN DUNGEON DOORS. AND THERE WAS A FAINT SMILE ON HIS HARD COLD FACE. HIS ASSISTANT, ERIC HAGEN, FOLLOWED CLOSE BEHIND...



DOCTOR ULLMAN STOPPED AT ONE OF THE METAL DOORS. HE SELECTED A KEY FROM THE RING HE CARRIED...

WELL, THE *MONEY* I PAY YOU IS THE *LEAST* I CAN DO, ERIC. *HOW* LONG HAS IT *BEEN, NOW?*

TWO YEARS, DOCTOR ULLMAN!

THE DOCTOR INSERTED THE KEY INTO THE LOCK AND TWISTED. THE BOLT SNAPPED OPEN. THE DOCTOR LAUGHED...

TWO YEARS, EH? IT'S BEEN *TWO YEARS* SINCE WE *EMPTIED THE WARDS* AND *HERDED ALL THE INMATES* INTO THESE *DUNGEON CELLS?*

YES, SIR! *TWO YEARS!*

THE DOCTOR TURNED TO ERIC, WHO TOWERED OVER HIM, TALL AND GRIM AND MUSCULAR...

DO YOU REALIZE HOW MANY *SHEETS* WE *DIDN'T HAVE TO BUY* IN TWO YEARS, ERIC? HOW MANY *BLANKETS?*

QUITE A LOT, SIR!

THE DOCTOR PUSHED OPEN THE SQUEALING METAL DOOR...

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WE'VE SAVED ON *LAUNDRY... CLEANING...FOOD...*

QUITE A *LOT,* SIR.

THE OLD MAN SAT IN THE DAMP DARKNESS OF HIS CELL...WHISPERING SOFTLY...

LINDA? WHERE DID YOU *GO,* LINDA? *LINDA...?*

YOU SAY HE *CALLS* THAT NAME *CONTINUOUSLY,* ERIC?

ALMOST *ALL* THE *TIME,* SIR...

THE DOCTOR SHOOK THE OLD MAN. THE OLD MAN TURNED WITH WIDE STARING EYES...

WHO IS LINDA, YOU OLD FOOL?

LINDA? LINDA? LINDA IS MY *LOVE!*

PROBABLY SOMEONE IN HIS *PAST,* DOCTOR!

THE DOCTOR INHALED THE NAUSEATING ODOR OF THE DANK CELL AND RETCHED...

LINDA, MY LOVE! *COME* TO ME!

YES! CHOKE... *PROBABLY!* LET'S... GAG...GET *OUT* OF HERE. HE'S BEYOND HELP!

WE...WE OUGHT TO *CLEAN* THESE CELLS *OUT,* DOCTOR... BEFORE AN *EPIDEMIC* BREAKS OUT...

THEY SLAMMED THE CELL DOOR SHUT AND MOVED BACK UP THE CORRIDOR...

PERHAPS YOU'RE *RIGHT*, ERIC! A *DEAD INMATE* MEANS WE *LOSE* HIS *ALLOTMENT*, AND WE *DON'T WANT THAT* TO HAPPEN, *DO* WE?

I'LL HAVE THE MORE *RATIONAL INMATES DO THE CLEANING*, DOCTOR. IT'LL *SAVE* HAVING TO *HIRE* ANYBODY...

...UP THE WINDING STONE STEPS LEADING TO THE ASYLUM BUILDING ABOVE...

YOU *ARE* CONSCIENCIOUS ABOUT BEING ECONOMICAL, ERIC. I'M *PROUD* OF YOU.

EVERY BUCK *SAVED* MEANS *FORTY CENTS FOR ME!* WHY *SHOULDN'T* I BE?

...AND OUT THROUGH THE DESERTED MUSTY WARDS. DOCTOR ULLMAN STOPPED AT A FILTHY WINDOW, LOOKING OUT...

IT'S *TIME* TO TURN ON THE *LIGHTS*, ERIC. WE WANT EVERYBODY DOWN THERE TO THINK THE WARDS ARE *STILL OCCUPIED*...

YES! I'LL DO THAT RIGHT NOW...

FAR BELOW THE BLEAK GREY INSANE ASYLUM, DOWN IN THE VALLEY, LIGHTS BLINKED ON AS TWILIGHT TURNED TO NIGHT. THE PEOPLE IN THEIR CLEAN WHITE HOUSES SAT AT CLEAN WHITE TABLES AND ATE FROM CLEAN WHITE DISHES AND NEVER DREAMED OF THE HORRORS GOING ON ABOVE THEM...

THEY NEVER HEARD THE ANGUISHED SCREAMS OF THE INMATES IN THEIR SLIMY STINKING DUNGEON CELLS... NEVER FELT THE STING OF ERIC'S WHIP...

YAAAAAHHHHHH...

COMPLAIN, WILL YOU? WELL, TAKE *THAT*... AND *THAT*... AND *THAT*...

THEY NEVER TASTED THE DISH WATER SOUP... THE SPOILED SLOP MEAT... THAT WAS FED TO THE INMATES...

WHAT HAPPENED, ERIC? WHY DID YOU HAVE TO *WHIP* HIM?

HE *COMPLAINED*, SIR! HE DIDN'T LIKE THE *MEAL* TONIGHT!

SOB... SOB...

OH?! WELL, IF HE *DOESN'T LIKE* WHAT WE *SERVE* HIM, *DON'T GIVE HIM ANY* FOR A WHILE. HE'LL *APPRECIATE* IT, AFTER... SAY... *THREE DAYS!*

NO! *NO!* P-PLEASE I'LL... *STARVE!* I'M *SORRY*... SOB... I'M *SORRY*...

No, the people in the clean white valley town never heard the sad mournful wails of the old man... crying for his loved one...
LINDA! LINDA... COME TO ME!
IF THEY WERE ONLY ALL LIKE HIM, EH, DOC?
YES! WE WOULDN'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE IF THEY WERE ALL AS HARMLESS AND AS HELPLESS AS HIM...
OH, I ALMOST FORGOT! THIS CAME FOR YOU TODAY!
Eric handed Doctor Ullman the very official looking envelope...
WHAT IS IT, DOC? YOU'RE WHITE AS A GHOST!
IT'S FROM THE STATE BOARD OF HOSPITALS. THEY'RE ARRIVING TOMORROW...FOR AN INSPECTION TOUR...
A chill crawled up Doctor Ullman's spine. If the state board discovered what was going on in the asylum, he and Eric would be thrown into jail...
WE'VE GOT TO MOVE THE PATIENTS BACK UPSTAIRS...GET CLEAN SHEETS FOR THE BEDS...SCRUB THE WARDS TILL THEY SHINE. HURRY, YOU IDIOT!
Y-YES, DOCTOR ULLMAN!
The two men scrambled down the passageway, unlocking the metal dungeon doors, flinging them wide, screaming angrily at the cowering inmates who blinked at them in terror. . .
ALL RIGHT. LET'S GO! UPSTAIRS! ON THE DOUBLE! GET MOVING! THERE'S WORK TO DO!
C'MON, OLD MAN! OUT OF YOUR CELL! OUT, I SAID. . .
NO! NO!
The inmates were herded into the passageway, and marched up into the wards that had lain deserted and empty for two years...
NO! NO! LINDA WILL BE COMING. I DON'T WANT TO MISS HER! LINDA...
HE'S GIVING ME TROUBLE, DOC.
GIVE ME THAT WHIP...
Doctor Ullman swung the heavy leather whip... lashing out at the old man...
UPSTAIRS, I SAID! UPSTAIRS!
NO! NO! I WANT MY LINDA! I WANT...
Y-I-I-I-I-I-I-

ALL NIGHT LONG, IN THE WARDS, THE STINGING WHIP ROSE AND FELL, URGING THE WAILING INMATES ON...

SCRUB THE WINDOWS... WASH DOWN THE FLOORS... POLISH THE BEDS... I WANT EVERYTHING SPOTLESS! WE'RE BEING INSPECTED TOMORROW!

ALL THE POOR ASYLUM PATIENTS SCURRIED ABOUT WITH PAILS AND MOPS AND POLISHING CLOTHS... CLEANING THE LONG-ABANDONED WARDS. ALL, THAT IS, EXCEPT THE OLD MAN WHO SAT IN A CORNER SOBBING SOFTLY...

LINDA! I WANT MY LINDA! THEY WON'T LET ME SEE MY LINDA!

WHY YOU...

LET HIM ALONE, ERIC!

MAYBE WE OUGHT TO PUT HIM BACK DOWN THERE... IN THE DUNGEON!

NO! WE CAN'T AFFORD IT! THEY MAY MAKE A COUNT!

BUT HE COULD CAUSE TROUBLE! HIM AND HIS STUPID LINDA! MAYBE HE'LL TALK! MAYBE HE'LL TELL THEM WHERE HE'S BEEN KEPT FOR TWO YEARS!

HE'S A BABBLING IDIOT! WHO'LL LISTEN TO THE JABBERING OF A RAVING MANIAC...

DOCTOR ULLMAN TURNED TO THE OTHER INMATES. HE BRANDISHED THE WHIP...

ONE WORD... ONE HINT FROM ANY OF YOU THAT YOU'VE BEEN MISTREATED IN THE SLIGHTEST DEGREE... AND YOU'LL REGRET IT...

THE INMATES COWERED IN FEAR AND TERROR. THERE WAS UNDERSTANDING IN THEIR EYES. EACH ONE OF THEM KNEW THAT THE DOCTOR MEANT BUSINESS. THERE WOULD BE NO SLIPS OF THE TONGUE FROM ANY OF THEM...

Y-YES, DOCTOR!

W-WE WON'T SAY A WORD!

NOT A WORD!

ALL RIGHT! NOW GET BACK TO YOUR WORK!

ONLY THE OLD MAN, OBLIVIOUS TO EVERYTHING, CONTINUED TO RAVE...

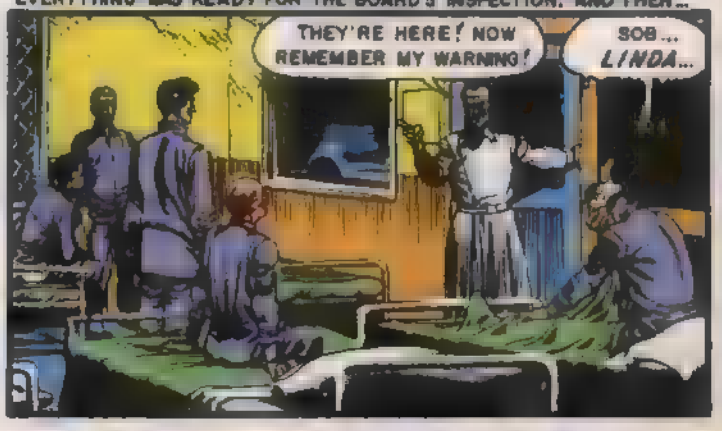
I WANT MY LINDA! I WANT MY...

YAAAAHHHHH...

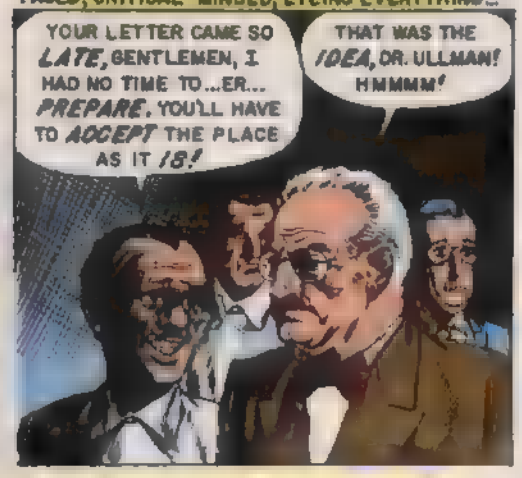
SHUT UP, YOU OLD FOOL...

LEAVE HIM BE, ERIC.

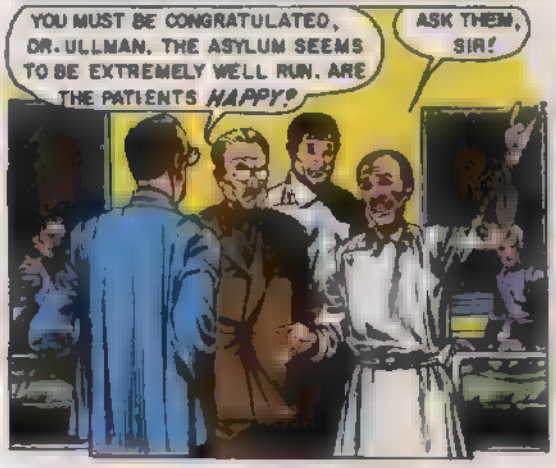
IN THE MORNING, THE WARDS WERE SPARKLING CLEAN. EACH BED WAS MADE WITH FRESH CLEAN SHEETS AND SPOTLESS BLANKETS. THE INMATES HAD ALL BEEN BATHED AND DRESSED IN NEW UNIFORMS. EVERYTHING WAS READY FOR THE BOARD'S INSPECTION. AND THEN...



THEY MOVED THROUGH THE ASYLUM, GRIM FACED, CRITICAL-MINDED, EYEING EVERYTHING...



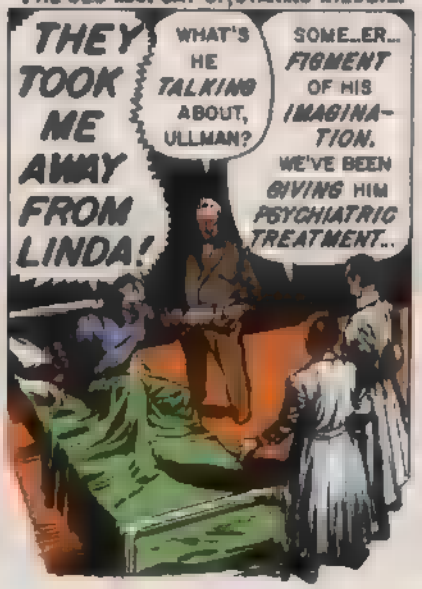
THEY NOTED THE TEMPTING ODORS DRIFTING FROM THE KITCHEN...THE GLEAMING BRASS OF THE BEDS...THE IMMACULATE CONDITION OF THE WARDS...



THEY WENT FROM BED TO BED...TALKING TO THE INMATES... INQUIRING...

SUDDENLY THE WARD REVERBERATED WITH AN ANGUISHED CRY...

THE OLD MAN SAT UP, STARING WILDLY...



HE CLIMBED FROM HIS BED...

THE OLD MAN SCAMPERED ACROSS THE WARD...DOWN THE CORRIDOR TO THE CELLAR DOOR...

LINDA! LINDA!

WHERE'S HE GOING?

HE'S MAD! WHY DON'T YOU LET ME...

...DOWN THE WINDING STONE STEPS. THE BOARD FOLLOWED...

ULLMAN! HAVE YOU BEEN USING THESE OLD DUNGEON CELLS?

OF COURSE NOT! HE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE HE'S GOING!

I'M COMING, LINDA!

...ALONG THE DIM DARK PASSAGEWAY...

YOU KNOW THE RULES, ULLMAN! THESE DUNGEONS WERE OUTLAWED SEVENTY YEARS AGO!

I NEVER USED THEM! I NEVER.

LINDA DARLING!

THE BOARD MEMBERS PEERED INTO THE CELL WHERE THE OLD MAN SAT COOING HAPPILY. THEY SNIFFED. THEY SAW THE TELL-TALE SIGNS... SMELLED THE TELL-TALE ODORS...

THIS CELL WAS USED RECENTLY, ULLMAN!

ONLY FOR A DAY OR SO! WHEN HE GOT VIOLENT! I SWEAR IT...

BEHIND THEM, THE OTHER INMATES WERE COMING DOWN THE STONE STEPS, MARCHING ALONG THE PASSAGEWAY, FILING INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE DUNGEON CELLS...

YOU'RE LYING, ULLMAN! THEY'VE ALL LIVED HERE FOR YEARS... NOT DAYS! STRONG ATTACHMENTS AREN'T MADE IN DAYS...

ATTACHMENTS...

THE BOARD MEMBER MOTIONED TO THE OLD MAN'S CELL. OR ULLMAN LOOKED... THEN PALED. HE WAS THERE ALL RIGHT... COOING AT LINDA... WHISPERING WORDS OF ENDEARMENT TO HIS LOVE...

GOOD LORD! CHOKE...

LINDA, THE OLD MAN'S LOVE, WAS A BIG FAT UGLY FOUL-SMELLING RAT.

HEH, HEH! WELL, KIDDIES! THERE'S A TOUCHING LITTLE TALE OF DEVOTION... AND SO TIMELY, TOO, WHAT WITH ST. VALENTINE'S DAY JUST AROUND THE CORNER. NOW, I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO C.K., WHO'S GOT A CIRCUS YARN TO PITCH AT YOU. OH, BY THE WAY. IF ANY OF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT NIGHTMARES ARE IN STORE FOR YOU...IF YOU'D LIKE TO FIND OUT WHETHER YOU'RE GOING TO DIE VIOLENTLY OR NOT, JUST VISIT AN ASTROLOGIST FIEND OF MINE. HE SPECIALIZES IN HORRORSCOPES! 'BYE, NOW!

President and CEO—Stephen A. Geppi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Dear CRYPT,

I love your comics and your taste of words. I am a very gut-busting fan of your comics. I love CRYPT #13, "Grounds. . .For Horror!". People should not let little kids work because it just drives them crazy. They seem to make up stories of who really did their killing.

Keep printing your stories. You have a very horror-hunger fan club out here. It's o.k. to print my address and zip code, I'm dying for a gut-bustin' pal.

Orlando Garcia — 1729 W Superior ST, Chicago, IL 60622

May I suggest a truss? —CK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

Hi! It's Shawn again. I have almost all your comics. All I need is 6 more. Anyway, how are you? I wanted to ask you something. WHY is your show not on anymore? I am very disappointed.

My brother threw a party when he heard you weren't on anymore. and I got a huge poster of the HBO version of you. You're the last thing I see before I go to bed! Well, I gotta go.

Shawn Van Elsis — Philadelphia, PA

This is your late brother (I promise). —CK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

It is to savor, each issue of your eerie oeuvre. Before dining on this one, #24, I realized it represented 3 1/3% of the entirety.

On page 5 of "Food for Thought", there is an invisible robe that Marta slips on. Perhaps it's the emperor's new robe? Ya know, at the turn of page 7, I figured Marta was targeted for the final twist instead of Carl.

In "Pearly to Dead", I guess Larry finally had his fill of Phil.

Bob Gorby — Camarillo, CA

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I have two dozen comics and a toy of you.

Jess Lovelace — Anchorage, AK

ME YOU

I have two jillion comics and a fan IN you! I'm a lucky dog! —CK

To "The Crypt-Keeper's Corner,"

Re. issue #24: "Food for Thought" page 7 panel 7, who is Martha? It is Marta in the other 47 panels.

The caption on panel 6 page 4 of the story "Pearly to Dead" reads: "The'y both fallen in love with her. . ." Who missed the "D" key on the typewriter?

It's quite a coincidence that in 1954 CK used the word 'Titanic' in the intro to the story "Prairie Schooner" because in 1998 that word is the talk of the land.

In "Half-Baked!" The Old Witch says that membership in the EC FanAddict Club is limited to 250,000,000 people. Thats almost the entire population of the United States, thats a lot of Addicts!! It's a nationwide epidemic!!

David Dellario — Kensington, CT

Let's slip you into a buried box and check YOUR enunciation, David-baby! The 'Titanic' disaster was common enough in the popular mind for the first 85 years, imagine if our reprint of WEIRD SCIENCE 6 had appeared in the last six months! —CK

Dear CK

"Undertaking Pair", #24, seems to touch on a lot of taboo subjects for a 50s comic; death and its consequences in the form of the mortuary, murder of innocents by an unscrupulous druggist in collusion with the mortician, a child's loss of a parent, and the subsequent revenging by a group of kids on the evil grown-ups (defying authority in the process) and, finally, violent assault and murder in a graveyard. The kids witnessing the graveyard murder is straight out of HUCKLEBERRY FINN. Quite an intricate plot for a 'lowly' comic book!

How original (and typical) of EC to have a story narrated by a grave ("The Craving Grave!")! This is one of the traits that put EC above all others in its day, and continues to 40 years thence!

EC's retelling of "The Sleeping Beauty!" resucit. . . resucit. . .revives a tired old fairy tale with snappy lingo and a Transylvanian twist.

Barry McCollum — Alton, IL

I wondered "whatever happened to my Transylvanian Twist!" —CK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

"Tales from the Crypt" 24 was great. Here's my review of it:

The cover: Jack Davis does what Jack Davis does best, he impresses EC fans, and often even sells comics to fans of non-EC comics and people who watch the TV show. The fish are pathetic, though.

"Food for Thought": This story is pretty good, and is better than the TV episode, which has very, very little to do with this comic story. The next three stories are all about the ocean, or at least have something to do the ocean.

"Pearly to Dead": This is a great story with great artwork. I like how George Evans carefully drew his stories with fine line and shadow. I really like the part when Phil and Larry are clearing the way for the US Navy to blow up Japan, and I LOVE the panel where Larry sees Phil's rotted face through the porthole, because it's very creepy. Great story!

"Prairie Schooner": This is not a bad story, but I don't like Bernie Kringstein's art. It's boring and ugly. If an artist with style, like Jack Davis, Johnny Craig, Graham Ingels, George Evans or Jack Kamen illustrated this story it would have been much better.

"Half-Baked": The creepy ocean thing is wearing off a little bit, and yet this still manages to be the best story in the book! The ocean scenes are great. Graham Ingels is a wonderful artist.

Too bad he never drew you or The Vault-Keeper. Jack Davis, usually the artist who's supposed to draw you, has drawn The Vault-Keeper and The Old Witch before; Johnny Craig, who's mostly known for drawing The Vault-Keeper, has drawn (and painted) you and The Old Witch before; but Graham Ingels, who's known for making the stupid, annoying character some people call The Old Witch worth looking at, has never drawn you or The Vault-Keeper. How sad! You and The Vault-Keeper are much better, much more original characters than The Old Witch, and I hate the title of her comic. A "Crypt of Terror" makes sense, a "Vault of Horror" makes sense, but a "Haunt of Fear" doesn't. A "haunt" is not a type of creepy place.

Questions: 1) Who's version of you is the most accurate, Al Feldstein, Jack Davis, Johnny Craig, Jack Kamen, the Amicus film or Kevin Yager, who created the TV version of you? 2) Are you related to The Vault-Keeper at all, even distantly? 3) Who is the oldest GhouLunatic? PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS SERIOUSLY AND HONESTLY!!!!!

Zeke Stern — Encinitas, CA

Did you know if you play Lennon saying, "Charlie and The Deafheads" from the LET IT BE album backwards he says "Phil floating past the porthole?"

We dip the entire mailorder staff in liquid Mylar twice a year, when we spray them for ticks.

If you were a habitue of The Old Witch's haunts, as I unwillingly am, you'd agree they're mighty creepy!

Only Jack Davis captured the pure physical power and athletic grace that is me! —CK

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

It's me, Monsterman, again. I just read your latest ish, #23, yesterday.

"Undertaking Palor" was great, up to the nice little poetic justice at the end. Still more proof that Jack Davis was the greatest of the EC artists.

"The Craving Grave!" was good, but it just felt like a remake of that one about the trunk. Besides, that thing about 'earth wombs' was way too necrophilicish.

Your version of "Sleeping Beauty!" was funny, particularly the character of 'Melvin?!'. I look forward to see how they do it on your show.

"Shadow of a Doubt" was too good a story for that old bat, The Old Witch. Who'da thunk that a shadow could kill someone? That's something to try on those dog days of summer.

Monsterman — address unknown

Er, you mean "Shadow of Death", no doubt. DON'T try it during a solar eclipse! Only the late Jack Benny could do complete justice to the 'Melvin?!' line (but that shouldn't be a problem for me, should it?). —CK

Also available this month are PANIC and PIRACY #7! Watch for VAULT, TWO-FISTED and VALOR next month! Don't forget HAUNT, FRONTLINE COMBAT and CRIME. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details)!

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, sold out; FRONT #1-4, $2 each; PANIC #1-4, $2.50 each; all others up thru issue #3, $1.50 each; CRYPT #4-16, and VAULT, 2FIST, HAUNT and CRIME #4-15, $2 each. All others, $2.50 each (Latest issues: CRYPT is up to #25, VAULT, 2FIST, HAUNT and CRIME are up to 24, FRONT to 13, PANIC to 7 and PIRACY to 7.).

Don't forget: the completed run of WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY/INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION, all 11 issues, #1-3 are $1.50 each, #4-11, $2 each; the completed run of SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES, all 18 issues, #1-3 are $1.50 each, #4-16 are $2.00 each and #17-18 are $2.50 each; the completed run of WEIRD SCIENCE, all 22 issues, #1-3 are $1.50 each, #4-16 are $2.00 each and #17-22 are $2.50 each; and the completed run of WEIRD FANTASY, all 22 issues, #1-3 are $1.50 each, #4-15 are $2.00 each and #16-22 are $2.50 each.

Add $5 per order ($10 outside US) for S&H.

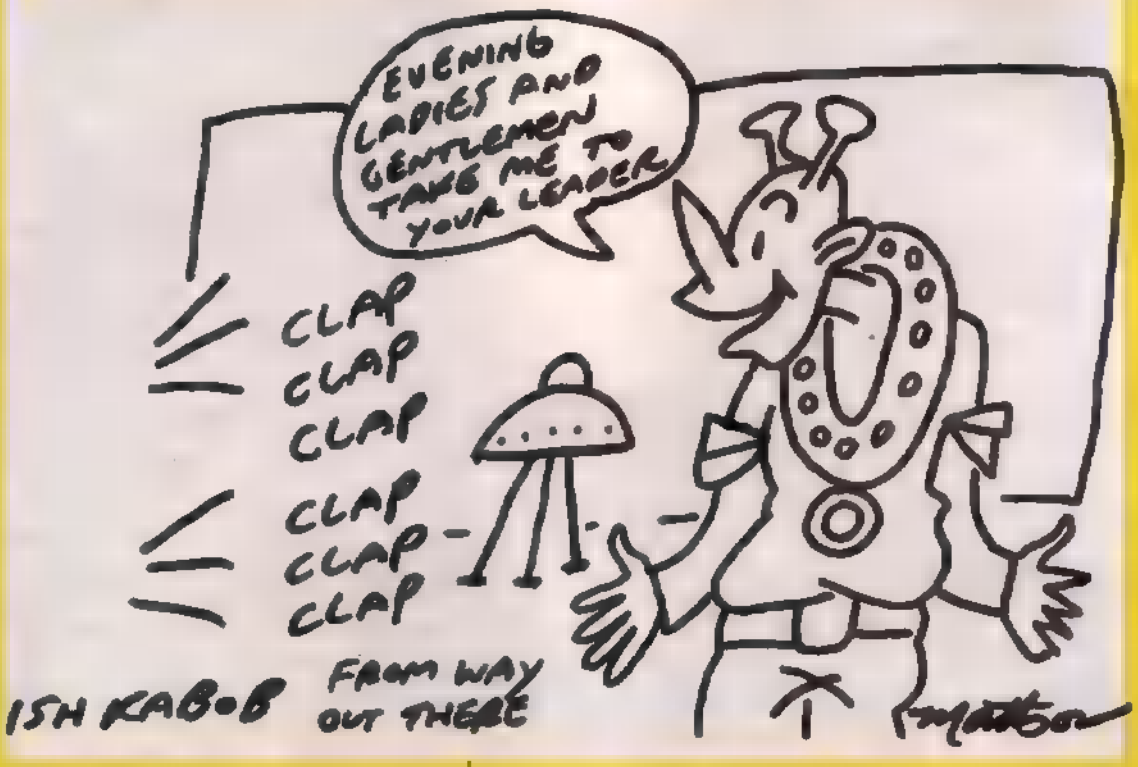
Write to:
CRYPT
GEMSTONE
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

THIS COMIC REPRINTS
TALES FROM THE CRYPT "#41" (#25, APR/MAY 54)

COVER by Jack Davis

"Operation Friendship"	Jack Davis
"Come Back, Little Linda!"	George Evans
"Current Attraction"	Jack Kamen
"Mess Call"	Graham Ingels

We welcome letters of comment. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, accuracy and length. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters, to do so we need your address on the individual letter.



When the Plutonian KOLLEGE OF PLUTONIC KNOWLEGE show ended with the retirement of bandleader Cy Cesium, his entourage dispersed to the eight corners of the solar system to start solo careers. Our luck, we got Ish! It does explain much about the career of Jerry Lewis, however. Showbiz tidbit from Frank 'Fracture the People' Mattson, Spring City, PA, to start THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S PAGE OF. . .

FINE ARTS #68a

Here's a switch; I go into the crypt to tell them, Brian Shea, Waltham, MA comes out of the grave to read them. Is there any way to cut out the middleman (you can use my spell)? –CK

Send your contribs (not returnable, not too long, not too big, legible doublespaced text &/or bold black art. Warning...we edit) to:

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S
PAGE OF FINE ARTS

Morphee's War, Morphee Brown, Morphee Bed, Mrs. Morphee's Chowder; all must bow to. . .

Morphee's Law

Mood like the weather, sultry, seeking.
Spies rumored vampire, strolls on, peeking.
Scent of a victim, wafting fine
Beckons this Dark One, keen to dine.

"Some say you're evil," comes her greeting.
"People will say things," her eyes meeting.
Foundering in eyes hypnogogic,
She falls to charms more than hypnotic.

Buries his canines, glist'ning, keen;
Sups from her jug'lar, feast unseen.
Vamp-eyes like onyx, grasping, glowing;
Blood of the victim, ebbing, flowing.

Touch of the vampire, rite unholy;
A kiss for the living who's
Death to the maiden, now undead;
Bridge of a monster with earthy bed.

Shudd'ring transition, metamorphic,
Resur-un-raction, grave-euphoric
"Well come," he says, "to my Necrology."
But she proves to be a prodigy.

She grabs his cloak, gives him a smack,
Bares his neck and bites him back.

As I recover from surgery, here's a candidate for the Fine Arts Page. Please print address.

R.C. Gorby, 2/27/98

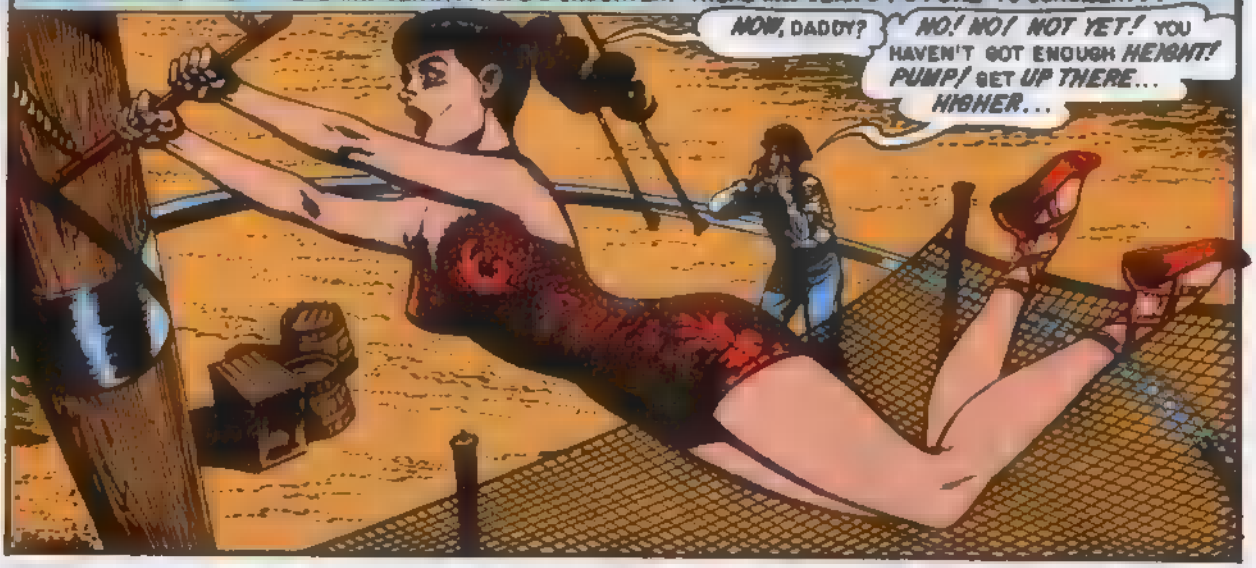
13153 Sunny LN
Camarillo, CA 93012

We welcome contributions. We cannot promise to return, acknowledge or publish contributions. We edit for clarity, accuracy and size. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication; to do so we need your address on the individual contribution.

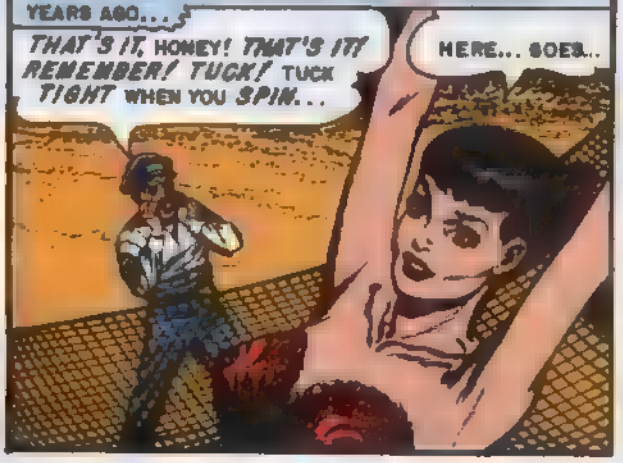
I CALL THIS ELECTRIFYING YARN...

CURRENT ATTRACTION

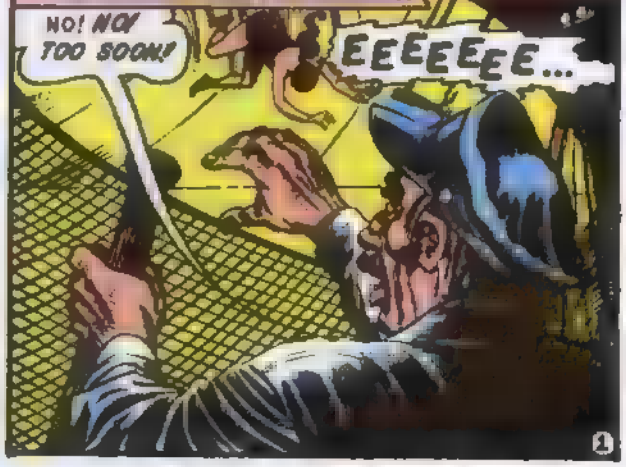
AGE HAD CREPT UP ON OLD RUFUS AND STIFFENED HIS JOINTS AND SLACKENED HIS MUSCLES AND FINALLY HE'D BEEN FORCED TO CLIMB DOWN FROM THE FLYING TRAPEZES WHERE FOR ALMOST A QUARTER OF A CENTURY HE'D REIGNED AS KING. NO MORE WOULD THE BAND PLAY AND THE DRUMS ROLL AND THE AUDIENCES GASP AS THE SPOTLIGHT FOLLOWED HIM ACROSS THE BIG TOP IN HIS DEATH-DEFYING AERIAL ACT. HE WAS A *HAS-BEEN*...A *FORGOTTEN NAME*...A *FADED STAR*. HIS PERFORMING DAYS WERE OVER. BUT THE CIRCUS WAS IN OLD RUFUS'S BLOOD. IT WAS HIS LIFE. AND SO HE'D STAYED ON...WATERING THE ANIMALS, HELPING THE ROUSTABOUTS, DOING ANY ODD JOB AVAILABLE...JUST SO HE COULD BE NEAR THE SPANGLES AND THE TANBARK AND THE CANVAS WORLD HE LOVED. AND THEN THERE WAS JEAN...RUFE'S DAUGHTER. THERE WAS JEAN'S *FUTURE* TO CONSIDER...



JEAN HAD BEEN TEN WHEN HER MOTHER HAD MISTIMED HER DOUBLE FORWARD SUMMERSAULT AND COME CRASHING DOWN TO THE BIG TOP FLOOR...LEAVING JEAN AN ORPHAN AND RUFE A WIDOWER. THAT HAD BEEN EIGHT YEARS AGO...



OLD RUFE FINGERED THE NET-POLE NERVOUSLY AS IF HE WERE AFRAID IT MIGHT SUDDENLY VANISH, LEAVING HIS PRECIOUS DAUGHTER SWINGING ALONE UP THERE WITHOUT ITS LIFE-PRESERVING PROTECTION...



FOR A MOMENT OLD RUFE'S HEART STOPPED BEATING AS HE WATCHED HIS LOVELY DAUGHTER'S BODY FLAIL, THEN PLUNGE DOWNWARD. IT WAS AN OLD MEMORY...ONE THAT HE WOULD NEVER FORGET...

IT'S...IT'S *ALL RIGHT*, HONEY! RELAX! *RELAX WHEN YOU HIT!*

JEAN SOBBED AS SHE CLIMBED DOWN FROM THE NET AND REACHED FOR THE CAPE HER FATHER HELD OUT FOR HER...

I'LL...I'LL *NEVER* BE ANY GOOD, DADDY! *NEVER!* SOB! WHY DON'T WE *GIVE UP?!*

YOU'LL DO IT, HONEY! *YOU'LL SEE!* YOU'LL BE A *STAR* SOMEDAY!

THEY WALKED IN SILENCE ACROSS THE TANBARK FLOOR, DOWN BETWEEN THE SEATS, AND OUT INTO THE SUNLIGHT...

AH, *THERE* YOU ARE! I HAVE BEEN LOOKING *ALL OVER* FOR YOU!

OH, *DADDY!* IT'S *ENRICO!* AND MY *EYES* ARE ALL RED!

SO WHAT!

A TALL HANDSOME DARK-EYED MAN MAN CAME STRIDING ACROSS THE GROUNDS, GRINNING BROADLY...

SO! I SEE YOU HAVE BEEN *PRACTISING*, LOVELY ONE! THAT IS *GOOD!*

I'LL *NEVER* BE ANY GOOD, ENRICO!

YOU'LL BE *GREAT*... SOMEDAY!

DON'T *TALK* THAT WAY! WHY, WHEN YOUR *MOTHER* AND ME STARTED...

OH, ENRICO! *THIS* IS MY *DADDY!* *EVERYBODY* CALLS HIM *'RUFE'!*

A *PLEASURE* TO MEET THE *FATHER* OF SUCH A *CHARMING GIRL*, MR...ER... RUFE!

RUFE STUDIED THE SUAVE-LOOKING STRANGER...

YOU'RE *NEW* AROUND HERE, AREN'T YOU? WHAT'S *YOUR ACT?*

ENRICO IS A *STAR*, DADDY! HE USUALLY GETS *TOP BILLING!* HE *JUST JOINED* OUR CIRCUS *YESTERDAY!* HE'S A *KNIFE-THROWER!*

I *ALSO* THROW THE *MACHETE* AND THE *CLEAVER*...

ENRICO TURNED TO JEAN...

I WILL SEE YOU *LATER*, THEN...AS WE *PLANNED*. AU REVOIR...

ALL RIGHT, ENRICO! 'BYE, FOR NOW!

HMMPH!

OLD RUFE AND HIS DAUGHTER WALKED ON IN SILENCE UNTIL THEY CAME TO THEIR TRAILER. THEN...

I DON'T LIKE HIM! HE'S A GREASY-LOOKIN' CHARACTER!

HE'S VERY SWEET, DADDY... AND VERY MISUNDERSTOOD! HIS WIFE...

OLD RUFE SPUN AROUND...

HIS WIFE?! HE'S MARRIED?!

OH, YES! HIS WIFE IS HIS PARTNER IN THE ACT! SHE STANDS UP AGAINST A BOARD AND HE...

I'LL NOT HAVE MY DAUGHTER GOING OUT WITH A MARRIED MAN!

DON'T BE SILLY, DADDY! WE'RE JUST FRIENDS! NOTHING MORE! HE'S VERY UNHAPPY!

THAT NIGHT, RUFE CAUGHT ENRICO'S ACT. IT WAS QUITE SENSATIONAL! HIS WIFE WOULD STAND SPREAD-EAGLED BEFORE A BOARD AND HE'D COOLY RING HER WITH KNIVES, THROWING THEM IN RAPID SUCCESSION, ENDING UP WITH A CLEAVER SLAMMING INTO THE WOOD BESIDE HER HEAD...

BRAVO! GREAT! TERRIFIC! GOOD LORD! ISN'T HE WONDERFUL, DADDY?

I'D HATE TO BE HIS WIFE AND HAVE HIM SORE AT ME! ONE SLIP...

THAT'S JUST IT, DADDY! THEY DON'T GET ALONG! HE'S NOT IN LOVE WITH HER ANY LONGER. BUT SHE REFUSES TO GIVE HIM A DIVORCE!

AND YOU MEAN TO TELL ME SHE LETS HIM STAND THERE AND THROW KNIVES AT HER!?

ISN'T SHE HORRIBLE? ENRICO IS A NERVOUS WRECK! HE DOESN'T WANT TO HARM A HAIR ON HER HEAD. THAT MAKES IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT FOR HIM!

HOW COME YOU'RE SO INTERESTED IN HIS PRIVATE LIFE?

I... I THINK I'M IN LOVE WITH ENRICO, DADDY!

WHAT!? IN LOVE WITH HIM! DON'T BE A FOOL, JEAN! YOU'RE TOO YOUNG! WHAT ABOUT YOUR CAREER? IN ANOTHER FEW MONTHS, YOUR ACT WILL BE SET AND YOU'LL BE ON YOUR WAY! LOVE ISN'T FOR YOU! NOT NOW!

JEAN SHOOK HER HEAD...

I'M *SORRY*, DADDY! I *CAN'T* JUST *TURN MY HEART OFF* LIKE A *RADIO!* WHEN IT *HAPPENS*, IT *HAPPENS!* AND YOU *CAN'T* DO ANYTHING *ABOUT* IT!

YOU CAN AVOID *LETTING* IT HAPPEN! YOU DON'T HAVE TO *LOOK* FOR IT!

JEAN SMILED AT HER FATHER AND STARTED OFF ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS...

IT'S *TOO LATE*, DADDY! IT'S *ALREADY HAPPENED!*

JEAN! COME BACK! JEAN!

HE COULD SEE THEM IN THE MOONLIGHT... MEETING AND WALKING OFF... ARM IN ARM... HIS DAUGHTER, AND ENRICO...

NO, JEAN! *NO!* I *WON'T* LET YOU *RUIN YOUR LIFE!* I'VE WORRIED *TOO LONG* AND *TOO HARD* WITH YOU TO LET YOU *THROW IT AWAY!*

THAT NIGHT, OLD RUFUS TRIED TO WAIT UP FOR HIS DAUGHTER TO COME HOME. HE REMEMBERED THE CLOCK HANDS POINTING TO THREE BEFORE HE DOZED OFF. AND WHEN HE AWOKE, IT WAS MORNING, AND JEAN WAS SLEEPING SOUNDLY...

THIS *CANNOT GO ON!* IT'S *INSANE!* I'VE GOT TO *TALK* TO HIM...

RUFE DRESSED ANGRILY AND HURRIED ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS TO THE TRAILER MARKED '*THE GREAT ENRICO!*' HE HAMMERED ON THE DOOR...

YEAH? WHAT DO YOU *WANT?*

YOUR... YOUR *HUSBAND?* I WANT TO *SEE* HIM... *ALONE!*

ENRICO'S WIFE WAS A TIRED-EYED BLEACHED BLONDE WHO REEKED OF LIQUOR. SHE STEPPED OUT OF THE TRAILER AND SMIRKED...

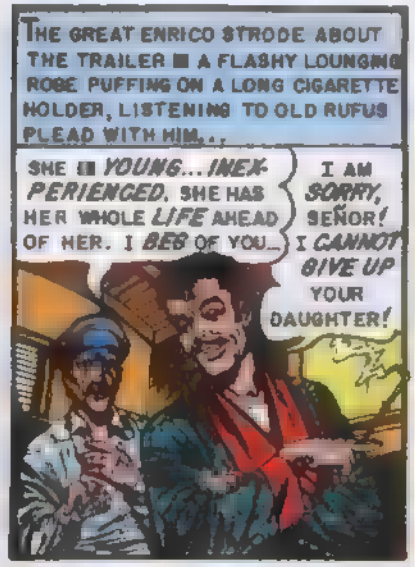
SURE, OLD MAN! ONLY YOU'LL HAVE TO *WAKE HIM UP*. HE WAS *OUT ALL NIGHT* LAST NIGHT. HE'S *STILL ASLEEP*.

TH-THANK YOU!

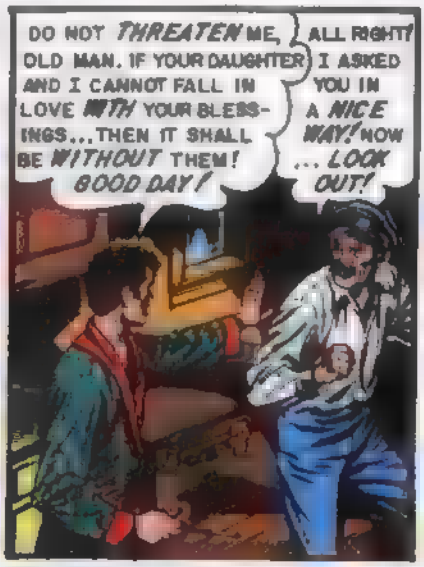
OLD RUFE LEANED OVER THE SNORING ENRICO AND SHOOK HIM ROUGHLY...

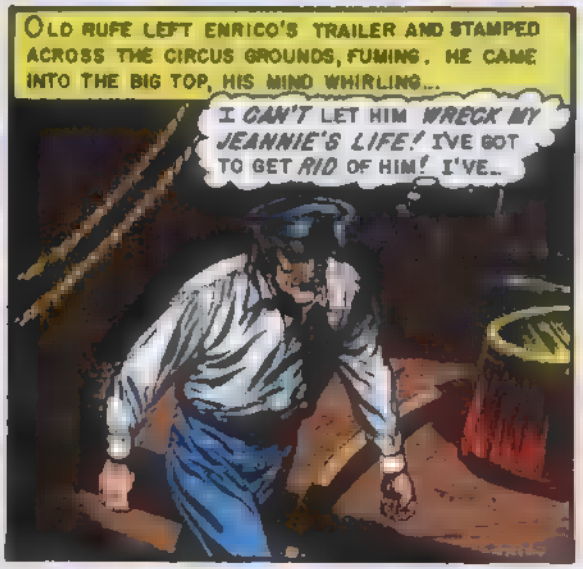
HUH? WHO... WHAT... YAWN... WHAT DO *YOU* WANT?

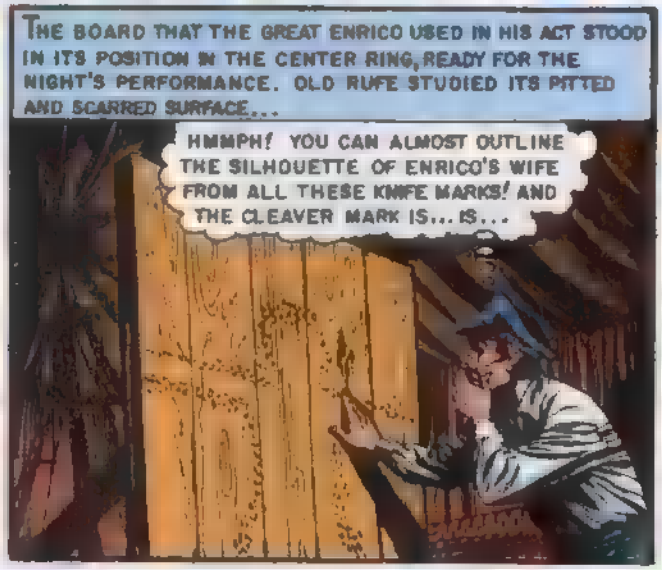
I WANT TO *TALK* TO YOU! ABOUT MY *DAUGHTER!* I WANT YOU TO *LEAVE HER ALONE!*


THE GREAT ENRICO STRODE ABOUT THE TRAILER IN A FLASHY LOUNGING ROBE PUFFING ON A LONG CIGARETTE HOLDER, LISTENING TO OLD RUFUS PLEAD WITH HIM...
SHE IS YOUNG... INEXPERIENCED. SHE HAS HER WHOLE LIFE AHEAD OF HER. I BEG OF YOU...
I AM SORRY, SEÑOR! I CANNOT GIVE UP YOUR DAUGHTER!

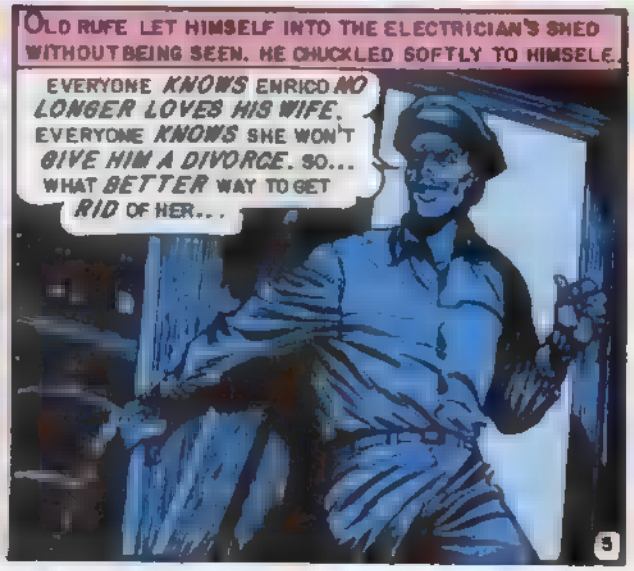
ENRICO SMILED...
I FIND HER TOO ATTRACTIVE!
I...I'M WARNING YOU, ENRICO!


DO NOT THREATEN ME, OLD MAN. IF YOUR DAUGHTER AND I CANNOT FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR BLESSINGS... THEN IT SHALL BE WITHOUT THEM! GOOD DAY!
ALL RIGHT! I ASKED YOU IN A NICE WAY! NOW ... LOOK OUT!


OLD RUFE LEFT ENRICO'S TRAILER AND STAMPED ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS, FUMING. HE CAME INTO THE BIG TOP, HIS MIND WHIRLING...
I CAN'T LET HIM WRECK MY JEANNIE'S LIFE! I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF HIM! I'VE...


THE BOARD THAT THE GREAT ENRICO USED IN HIS ACT STOOD IN ITS POSITION IN THE CENTER RING, READY FOR THE NIGHT'S PERFORMANCE. OLD RUFE STUDIED ITS PITTED AND SCARRED SURFACE...
HMMPH! YOU CAN ALMOST OUTLINE THE SILHOUETTE OF ENRICO'S WIFE FROM ALL THESE KNIFE MARKS! AND THE CLEAVER MARK IS... IS...

ENRICO'S VOICE RANG IN OLD RUFE'S EAR...
I FIND HER... TOO ATTRACTIVE!
OF COURSE! THAT'S IT! ATTRACTION! THAT'S IT!


OLD RUFE LET HIMSELF INTO THE ELECTRICIAN'S SHED WITHOUT BEING SEEN. HE CHUCKLED SOFTLY TO HIMSELF.
EVERYONE KNOWS ENRICO NO LONGER LOVES HIS WIFE. EVERYONE KNOWS SHE WON'T GIVE HIM A DIVORCE. SO... WHAT BETTER WAY TO GET RID OF HER...

RUFE CARRIED THE COIL OF FINE COPPER WIRE AND THE BAR OF SOFT IRON BACK TO THE BIG-TOP.

TONIGHT...TONIGHT ENRICO THROWS THE CLEAVER *DIRECTLY AT HIS WIFE'S HEAD*... SPLITTING IT OPEN...*KILLING* HER. IT WILL BE SO *OBVIOUS!* HE WILL BE CHARGED WITH *MURDER!* ALL THE EVIDENCE WILL *POINT* TO IT! EVEN *JEAN* WILL HAVE TO TESTIFY AGAINST HIM!

...AND SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, RUFUS WOUND THE COPPER WIRE AROUND THE IRON CORE, CREATING A POWERFUL ELECTRO-MAGNET. THEN HE SECURED THE MAGNET TO THE REAR OF THE TARGET BOARD, EXACTLY BEHIND WHERE ENRICO'S WIFE'S HEAD ALWAYS RESTED..

THERE! NOW...TO ATTACH THE WINDINGS TO A STRONG CURRENT...AND WE'RE SET! WHEN HE THROWS THAT CLEAVER...

THAT NIGHT, THE SHOW BEGAN AS USUAL. OLD RUFE STOOD BY, WAITING FOR ENRICO'S ACT TO BEGIN...

HE GOES ON IN *THIRTY SECONDS!* HE...

HEY, RUFE! I GOT A *JOB* FOR YOU! *C'MON!*

THE ROUSTABOUT FOREMAN LED RUFUS OUT OF THE BIG TOP! BEHIND, THE DRUMS ROLLED...THE CYMBOLS CLASHED...

THAT'S...THAT'S *ENRICO'S ACT* STARTING! I WANTED TO *SEE* IT! I...

YOU'LL *SEE* IT *TOMORROW!* THIS IS *MORE* IMPORTANT! I *OWE* THIS SOMEBODY A *FAVOR!*

RUFUS FOLLOWED THE FOREMAN ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS. A FIGURE STOOD IN THE MOONLIGHT, WAITING...

HELP THIS GAL CARRY HER BAGS DOWN TO THE STATION, EH, RUFE!

Y-YOU!

YES! ME! I'M *LEAVIN' HIM!* YOUR *DAUGHTER* CONVINCED ME!

RUFES'S BLOOD FROZE! THE DRUMS WERE BUILDING UP TO A CRESCENDO NOW. THE END OF THE GREAT ENRICO'S ACT WAS AT HAND, RUFUS COULD SEE THE CLEAVER RAISED...SEE IT FLYING THROUGH THE AIR...SEE IT WAVER AS IT ENTERED THE MAGNETIC FIELD...SEE IT SWERVE INWARD... CUTTING...SPLITTING...THE BLOOD...THE RED RAW FLESH AND BONE... THE BRAINS...

CHOKE...AND *SHE? JEAN?* MY *DAUGHTER?*

SHE'S TAKING MY PLACE IN *THE ACT*, TOO! C'MON! LET'S GO!

BEHIND THEM, CYMBOLS CRASHED AND A BASE-DRUM BOOMED. THE CROWD GROANED...

HEH, HEH! SO IF ANYBODY'S *INTERESTED* IN A *SLIGHTLY USED, SECOND-HAND KNIFE-THROWER'S BOARD*, IT'S *AVAILABLE*. ONLY THING IS, IT'S A BIT *STAINED!* OF COURSE, AS FAR AS *I'M* CONCERNED, IT OUGHT TO BE *USED* THAT WAY! SORT OF *ADDS* SOMETHING, DON'T YOU THINK? AND NOW, IT'S TIME TO TURN YOU OVER TO *THE OLD WITCH*, WHO WILL *WIND UP* MY *MORBID MAG* FOR THIS ISSUE. OH! *REMEMBER THE E.C. FAN ADDICT CLUB!* DON'T *DO* NOTHIN'! JUST *REMEMBER* IT! 'BYE!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE WITH YOUR *TONGUES* HANGING OUT! COME *IN!* COME INTO *THE HAUNT OF FEAR!* I'VE GOT ANOTHER *SLIME-SERVING* BREWING IN MY *CAULDRON*, ALL *READY* TO *DISH OUT.* YEP! IT'S *ME*, AGAIN... THE *OLD WITCH!* HEE, HEE! *HUNGRY* FOR *HORROR*, ARE YOU? *GOOD!* THEN CLOSE YOUR DILATED NOSTRILS AND OPEN YOUR LITTLE LEERING MOUTHS AND I'LL SHOVEL IN FOUL FARE. THIS IS *HANS GRUBER'S REEKING RECIPE*... VINTAGE *1918.* LISTEN, NOW, TO THE *TASTY TALE OF TERROR HANS CALLS...*

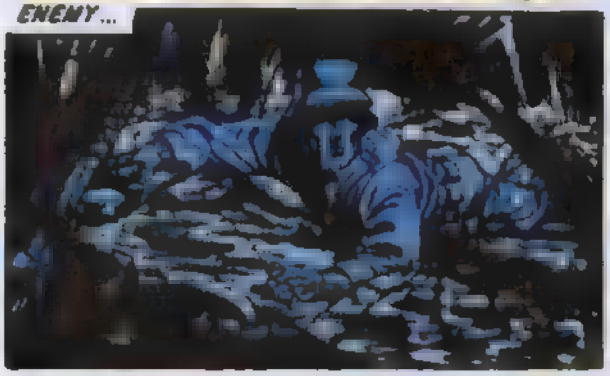
MESS CALL

GHASTLY

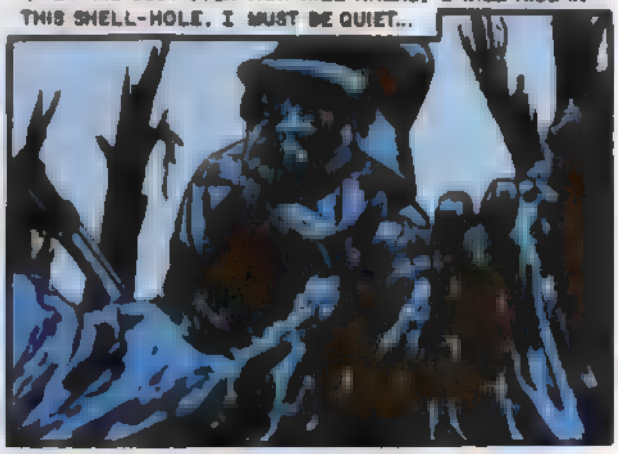
AHHH! IT IS WARM AND DRY HERE. IT IS GOOD TO FEEL WARM AND DRY. I AM SO TIRED... SO VERY TIRED. AND MY EYES ARE HEAVY WITH SLEEP. I CLOSE THEM. I SLEEP...

I AM GOING OUT THERE AGAIN. I DO NOT LIKE IT OUT THERE. IT IS WET AND COLD OUT THERE. HERE IT IS WARM AND DRY...

I AM CRAWLING ON MY BELLY THROUGH THE MUD. IT IS COLD AND DAMP AND I SHIVER AND MY TEETH CHATTER. I GRIP MY MAUSER TIGHTER. I AM APPROACHING AREA 14 N.W. I MUST BE QUIET. *THEY* ARE THERE... *THE ENEMY*...



THEY ARE JUST OVER THAT HILL AHEAD. I WILL HIDE IN THIS SHELL-HOLE. I MUST BE QUIET...



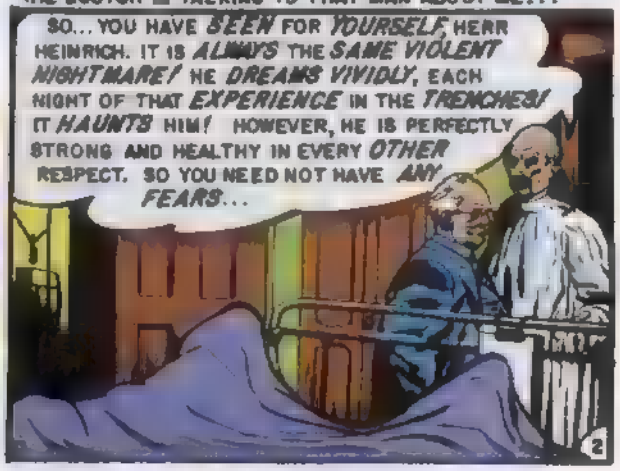
'*NOV. 21, 1917, 10:40 P.M. ENEMY POSITION: 115 YDS. WEST OF...*' I STOP WRITING MY REPORT. I LISTEN. SOMEONE IS HERE...HERE IN THIS SHELL-HOLE... *WITH ME*...

HE COMES AT ME... AN ENEMY SOLDIER. I SWING MY MAUSER AROUND, SENDING MY BAYONET INTO HIS SOFT BELLY... PLUNGING IT UPWARD... FEELING THE CRUNCHING BONE...HEARING THE SUCKING SOUNDS...

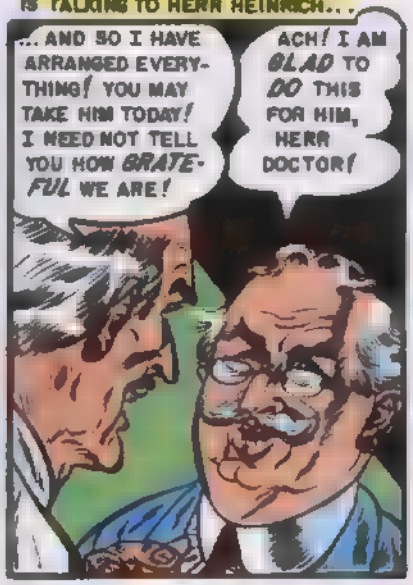
I AM FRIGHTENED. HIS ARMS SWING OUTWARD. I PULL MY BAYONET AND THRUST AGAIN...STABBING... SLASHING...CUTTING HIM TO RIBBONS. I SEE HIS FACE...HIS EYES...AND THE BLOOD POURING...AND I AM SICK...

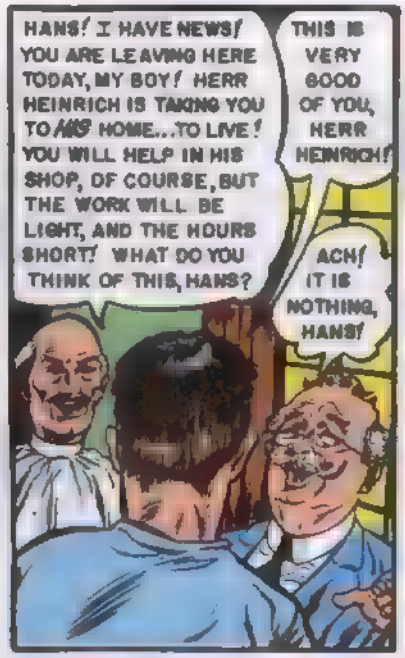
HE...HE IS *DEAD!* AND NOW, MY OBERLEUTNANT IS *CALLING* ME...CALLING ME *BACK*. EVERYTHING IS FADING. NO! IT IS *NOT* MY OBERLEUTNANT CALLING ME. IT IS THE *DOCTOR'S* VOICE. I AM BACK WHERE IT IS WARM AND DRY...

THE DOCTOR IS TALKING TO THAT MAN ABOUT ME...



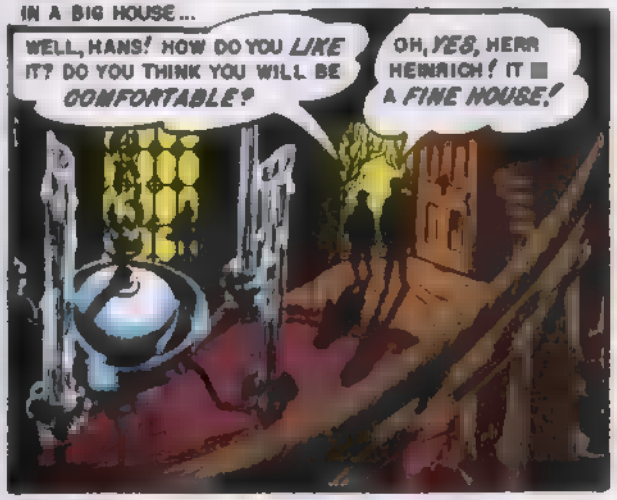
I WAS ASLEEP, BUT I AM AWAKE NOW. IT IS MORNING AND THE DOCTOR IS TALKING TO HERR HEINRICH...



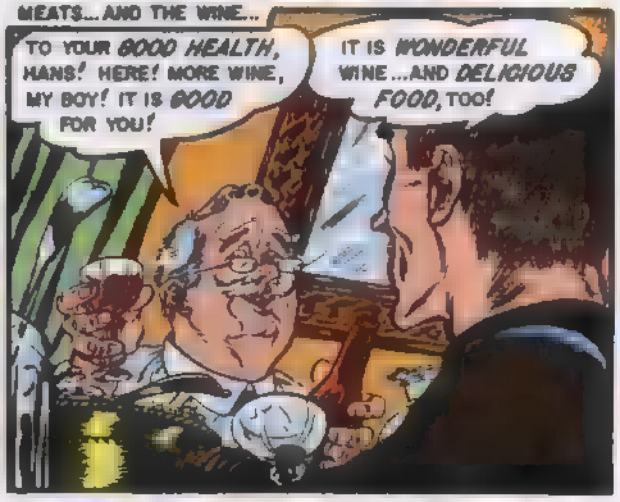


WE ARE RIDING IN A CARRIAGE. IT IS GOOD TO BE OUT OF THE HOSPITAL. HERR HEINRICH IS A KIND MAN...

HERR HEINRICH'S HOUSE IS BIG. IT IS VERY NICE TO LIVE IN A BIG HOUSE...



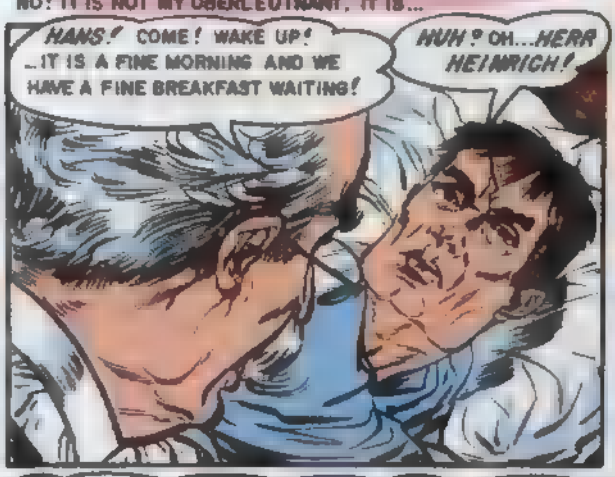
THIS FOOD IS GOOD. I LIKE ESPECIALLY THE PICKLED MEATS...AND THE WINE...



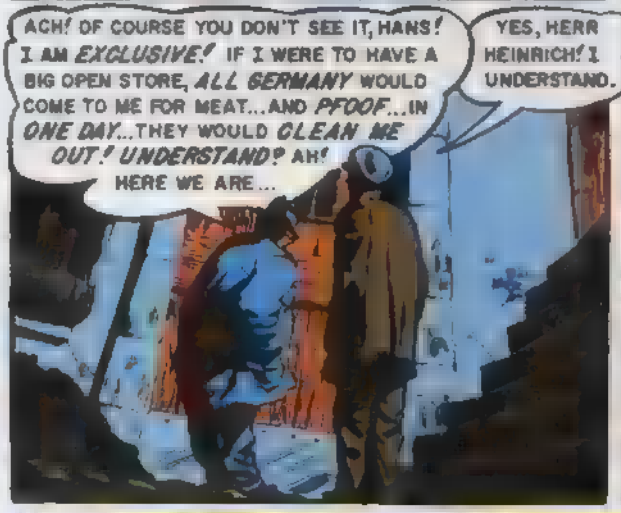
MY ROOM...IT HAS NICE THINGS. THE BED IS VERY SOFT, AND I AM TIRED...

AHHH! IT IS WARM HERE... WARM AND DRY. I LIE ON MY NEW SOFT BED...AND I DOZE...

I AM STABBING...SLASHING...CUTTING HIM TO RIBBONS. I SEE THE BLOOD POURING, AND I AM SICK. HE IS DEAD. AND NOW, MY OBERLEUTNANT IS CALLING...CALLING ME BACK. NO! IT IS NOT MY OBERLEUTNANT. IT IS...



THE AIR IS COOL, BUT I AM WARM. WE ARE WALKING TO HERR HEINRICH'S SHOP. I FEEL GOOD...



THERE IS MUCH MEAT IN HERR HEINRICH'S SHOP AND MANY PEOPLE COME TO BUY...

HERR LUDMEYER HAS COME. WE ARE DRINKING AND EATING GOOD PICKLED MEATS. AND I GROW TIRED..

I GO TO MY ROOM AND UNDRESS AND LIE ON MY SOFT BED...SOFT AND WARM AND DRY...

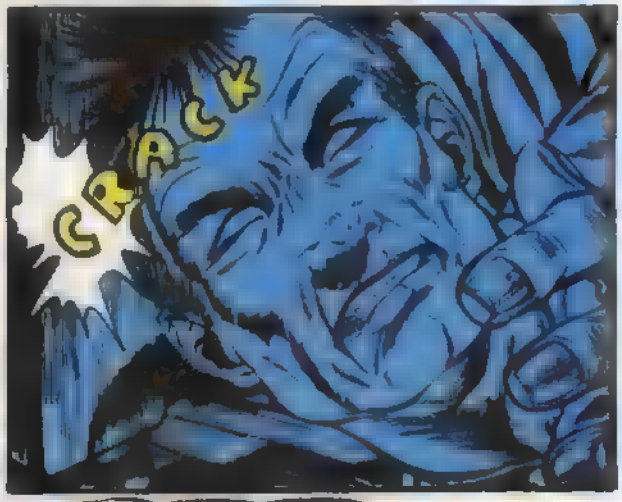
HE COMES AT ME AND I SWING AROUND, SENDING MY BAYONET INTO HIS SOFT BELLY... CUTTING, STABBING, SLASHING HIM TO RIBBONS ... THE BLOOD POURING...POURING...

I AM SWEEPING THE SHOP. I DO THIS EVERY MORNING. AND I HELP HERR HEINRICH LIFT THE HEAVY THINGS. I AM STRONG...

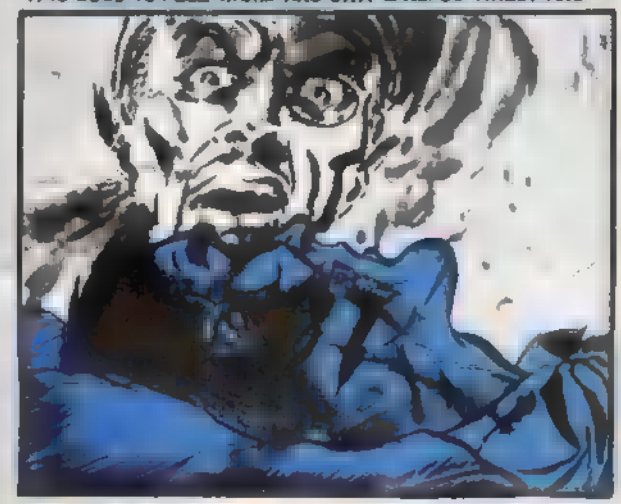
HERR HEINRICH IS FRIENDLY. HE IS AGAIN INVITING SOMEONE TO HIS HOUSE.

AGAIN I AM DRINKING AND EATING WITH HERR HEINRICH'S FRIENDS. MANY TIMES I DO THIS...TONIGHT, I DON'T FEEL GOOD. DRINKING...TOO MUCH...

I AM IN MY ROOM! IT IS DARK HERE! I AM DIZZY! EVERYTHING IS SPINNING AND I AM FALLING...FALLING...



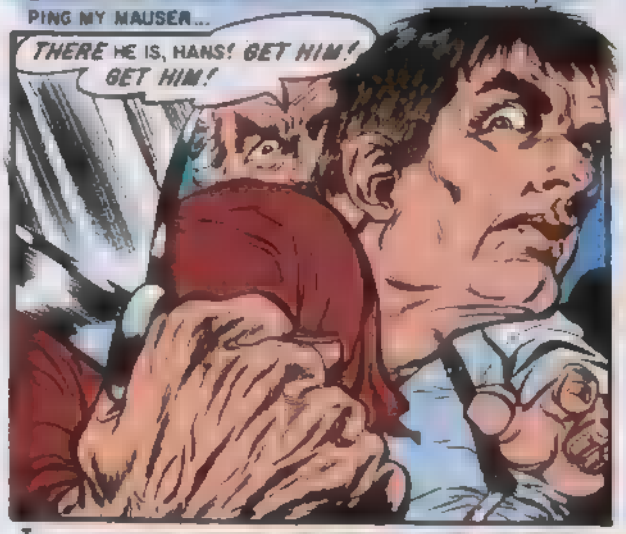
M...MY HEAD! IT HURTS! IT...IT IS WARM AND DRY HERE! IT IS GOOD TO FEEL WARM AND DRY. I AM SO TIRED. AND



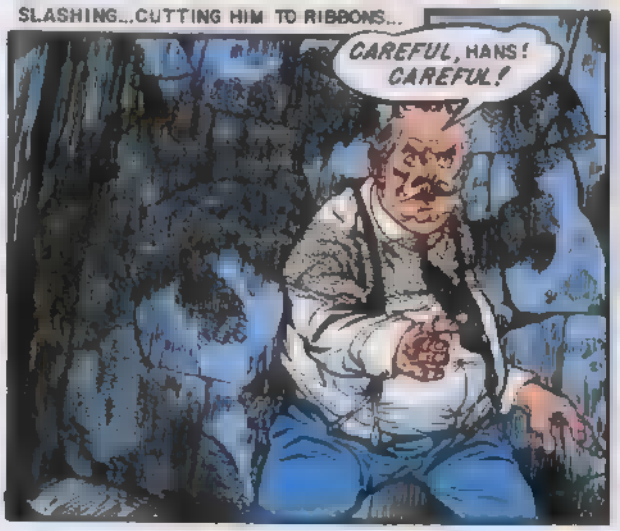
HURRY, CORPORAL! THERE IS MUCH TO DO TONIGHT! COME! COME!
YES, OBERLEUTNANT!

IT IS COLD AND DAMP AND I SHIVER AND MY TEETH CHATTER...
THIS WAY, CORPORAL! THIS WAY. BUT BE CAREFUL! THE ENEMY IS JUST OVER THAT HILL...

I MUST BE QUIET. I WILL HIDE IN THE SHELL HOLE AND MAKE OUT MY REPORT...
NOVEMBER 21, 1917. 10:40 P.M. ENEMY POSITION: 115 YARDS WEST OF...
LISTEN, HANS! LISTEN! TAKE THIS! YOUR MAUSER...


SOMEONE IS IN THIS SHELL HOLE WITH ME. I TURN, GRIPPING MY MAUSER...
THERE HE IS, HANS! GET HIM! GET HIM!

AN ENEMY SOLDIER... I SWING AROUND, SENDING MY BAYONET INTO HIS SOFT BELLY... FEELING THE CRUNCHING BONE... HEARING THE SUCKING SOUND...
GOOD, HANS! GOOD! NOW, GO TO WORK!


I PULL OUT MY BAYONET AND THRUST AGAIN... STABBING... SLASHING... CUTTING HIM TO RIBBONS...
CAREFUL, HANS! CAREFUL!

I SEE HIS FACE... HIS EYES... AND THE BLOOD POURING ...POURING. AND I AM SICK...
HANS! WHY DO YOU STOP? FINISH! FINISH YOUR WORK!

MY HEAD HURTS WHERE I STRUCK IT AND MY DREAM VANISHES, AND I AM STANDING IN A DARK DAMP CELLAR BEFORE A...A...

OH, LORD! A BUTCHER'S CHOPPING BLOCK!

GO ON, HANS! FINISH!

CHOKE! THERE... THERE IS A BODY ON THE BLOCK! IT IS... HERR SHOTZ! AND THIS IS NO BAYONET! THIS IS A CLEAVER IN MY HAND!

CORPORAL! I ORDER YOU! FINISH YOUR ASSIGNMENT!

I...I...HAVE DONE A HORRIBLE TERRIBLE THING! BUT...BUT HOW MANY OTHER TIMES HAVE I DONE THIS? HOW MANY OTHER TIMES HAS HE...HE...? OOOOH...MY HEAD! MY MEMORY! IT'S COMING BACK!

HANS! GO! GO UPSTAIRS!!

I REMEMBER, NOW! YES! YES! I WAS A BUTCHER... A GOOD BUTCHER! THEN, A SOLDIER! I WAS A SOLDIER AND I KILLED A MAN IN A SHELL HOLE! THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION! EVERY NIGHT I HAVE DREAMED OF THAT KILLING! Y...YOU! YOU MADE ME DO THIS FIENDISH WORK... WHILE I DREAMED!

YES!...YES! YOU FOUND OUT I WAS A BUTCHER! LIKE NO OTHER SHOP IN ALL GERMANY, YOURS IS FULL OF MEAT! ALL OF THE VISITORS YOU HAVE BROUGHT DOWN HERE! YES! OF COURSE! YOUR EXCLUSIVE SHOP IS FILLED WITH HUMAN MEAT!!

N..NO! NO!

HE COMES AT ME...AND EVERYTHING GOES BLACK. IT IS SUDDENLY COLD AND DAMP AND HE IS THE ENEMY SOLDIER AND I AM SENDING MY BAYONET INTO HIS SOFT BELLY...CRUNCHING THE BONE...HEARING THE SUCKING SOUNDS... STABBING...SLASHING...CUTTING HIM TO RIBBONS...HIS FACE...HIS EYES...THE BLOOD POURING...POURING...

GOOD LORD!

CHOKE...

HEE, HEE! WELL, FIENDS! THAT'S MY DELIRIUM DISH FOR THIS ISSUE OF C.K.'S MAG. POOR HANS! THAT BLOW ON THE NOGGIN CLEARED IT FOR A FEW MINUTES... BUT HE SOON SLIPPED BACK INTO THE OLD GRIND! ANYWAY, HE WAS PUT INTO A NICE WARM DRY ROOM WITH CUSHIONED WALLS AND BARRED WINDOWS AND HE NEVER ATE ANOTHER HAMBURGER AS LONG AS HE LIVED! 'BYE, NOW. WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN V.K.'S MAG, THE VAULT OF HORROR!

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